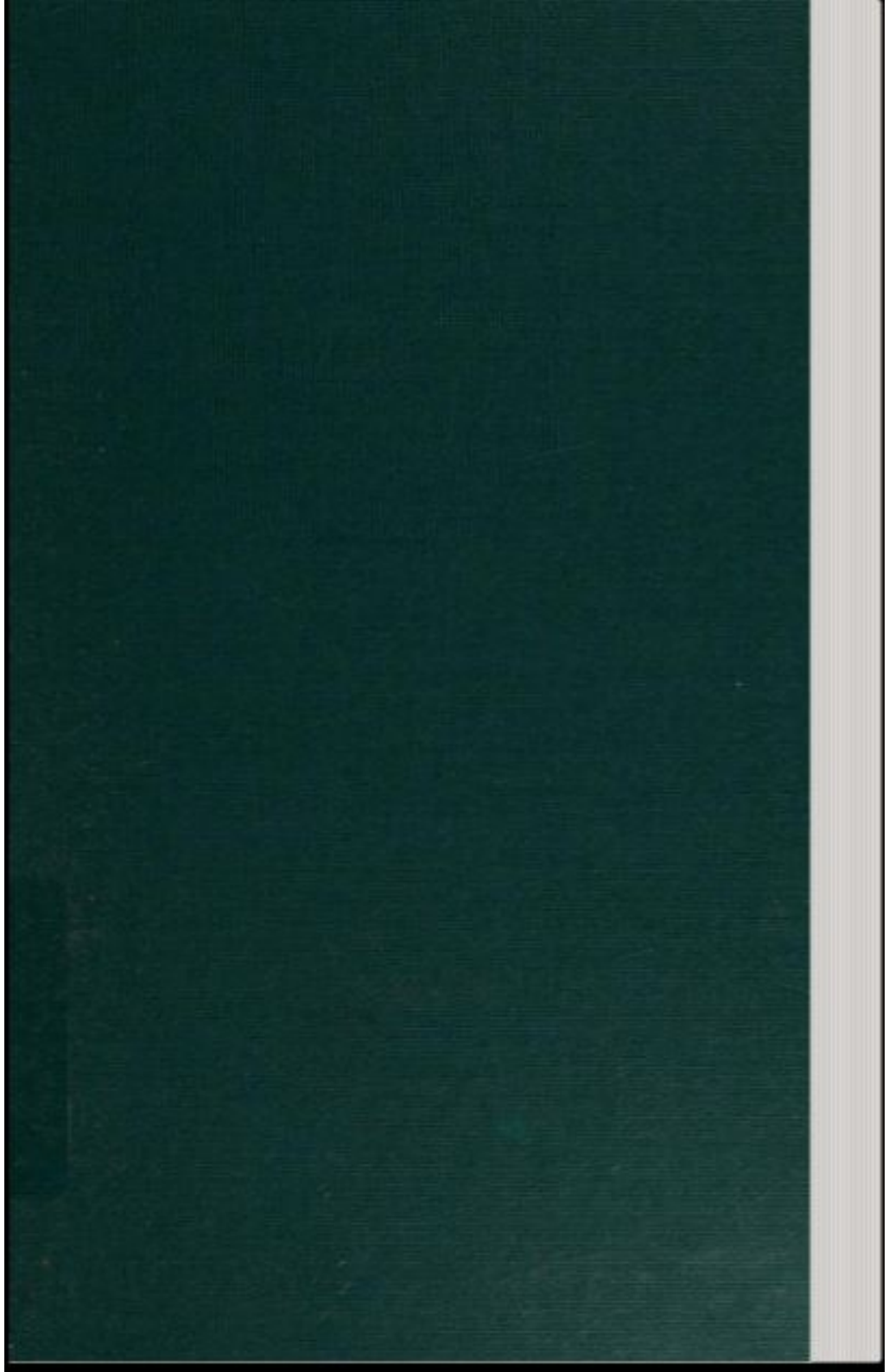

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The Zohar

TRANSLATED BY HARRY SPERLING
MAURICE SIMON
AND DR. PAUL P. LEVERTOFF

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SHEMOTH

Ex. I, 1–VI, 1

NOW THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WHICH CAME INTO EGYPT: EVERY MAN AND HIS HOUSEHOLD CAME WITH JACOB. It is written: *And the wise shall be resplendent as the splendour (zohar) of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness shall be like the stars for ever and ever* (Dan. XII, 3). "The wise" are those who penetrate to the real essence of wisdom; "they shall be resplendent", i.e. illumined with the radiance of the supernal Wisdom; "as the splendour", this is the flashing of the Stream that goes forth from Eden (Gen. XI, 10), this being alluded to as "the firmament". There are suspended the stars, the planets, the sun and the moon, and all the radiant lights. The brightness of this firmament shines upon the Garden of Eden, and in the midst of the Garden stands the Tree of Life, whose branches spread over all forms and trees and spices in fitting vessels. All the beasts of the field and all the fowls of the air shelter beneath the branches of this Tree. The fruit of the Tree gives life to all. It is everlasting. The "other side" has no abode therein, but only the side of holiness. Blessed are they who taste thereof; they will live for ever and ever, and it is they who are called "the wise", and they are vouchsafed life in this world as well as in the world to come.

The Tree rises to a height of five hundred parasangs, and its circumference is six myriads of parasangs. Within this Tree is a light[1] out of which radiate certain colours: they come and go, never being at rest save in the Tree. Should they issue from it to show themselves in the brightness which does not shine of itself,[2] they are not at rest but flit about. From this Tree went forth twelve tribes,[3] who had long been warmed by it, and they went down with this light that does not shine of itself into the exile of Egypt, accompanied by multitudes of heavenly hosts.

[1] *Tiferetk.* [2] *Malkuth.* [3] The twelve 'obliquities' of *Tiferetk.*

R. Simeon compared the Egyptian with the Babylonian exile, basing his remarks on the text: "The word of the Lord came (lit. coming came) to Ezekiel" (Ezek. I, 3). 'Why', he said, 'the double expression "coming came"? [2b] Moreover, if Ezekiel was indeed a faithful prophet, why did he disclose the whole of his vision? Is it right and meet for one whom the king has invited to his palace to reveal all the secrets which he has seen there? Now Ezekiel was indeed a faithful prophet, and whatever he saw he faithfully kept secret, and whatever he revealed he revealed by permission of the Holy One, blessed be He, and for proper reasons. Observe now that one who is accustomed to pain bears it patiently, but if one is not accustomed to pain and has always lived at ease, when pain comes upon him he really feels it keenly and deserves to be pitied. So when Israel went to Egypt they were inured to suffering, their father, the righteous Jacob, having been all his life a man of sorrows, and they could thus endure the exile patiently. But the exile of Babylon was a real torment for which there was weeping both in heaven and on earth, as it is written: "Behold, their heroes (angels) cried without, the angels of peace weeped bitterly" (Isa. XXXIII, 7); "by the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion" (Ps. CXXXVII, 1): yea truly, all joined in the lamentation. They who had been brought up in royal luxury were now driven into exile with their necks yoked and their hands fettered; and when they reached the land of exile despair settled in their hearts, and they thought that they would never be raised up again, since God had deserted them. At that hour the Holy One called together all His heavenly hosts, His Family above, all the holy Chariots, the lower and the higher ranks, the whole celestial army, and spoke to them thus: "What do ye here? My beloved children are captives in Babylon, and do ye remain here? Arise, all of you, and go to them, and I will go with you." When the celestial Company arrived in Babylon, the heavens opened, and the holy spirit of prophecy descended upon Ezekiel, and he saw his wonderful vision, and proclaimed to the exiles: "Behold, your Master is here, and all the celestial beings have come down to be

your companions." But they believed it not, and so he was compelled to disclose to them the whole of his heavenly vision. Then their joy was exceedingly great, and they recked not of the exile, knowing that the Lord Himself was in their midst. They were all filled with a perfect love of Him, ready to sacrifice themselves for the holiness of the All-Holy, blessed be He! This is the reason why the prophet disclosed to them all that he saw.

'We have been taught that wherever Israel went into captivity the Shekinah went with her. We learn this in the present instance from the expression "children of [the supernal] Israel", which we take here to refer to the heavenly hosts and chariots, which, we are told, "came with Jacob to Egypt".' R. Hiya cited in this connection the verse: *Come with me from Lebanon, bride, with me from Lebanon! Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.* (S.S. IV, 8). 'This', he said, 'refers to the Community of Israel. When the Community of Israel left Egypt and went up to Mount Sinai to receive the Law, the Holy One said to her: "Come with Me, My bride, with Me, *Lebanah* (lit. white), thou moon who receivest thy light from the Sun! [3a] Look (*tashuri*), a beautiful present (*teshurah*) wilt thou receive for thy children, from the top of Amana, from the realm of the supernal Faith (*emunah*)", the reference in the last word being to the children of Israel when they said, "all that the Lord hath said we will do, and obey" (Ex. XXIV, 7), and who were then like angels, perfectly united, of whom the Psalmist sings, "bless ye the Lord, ye angels, mighty in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word" (Ps. CIII, 20). Thus Israel received a present "from the top of Senir and Hermon": i.e. from Mount Sinai, at the nether part of which they stood. Also "from the lions' dens": namely, the children of Seir, who refused the Law when offered to them. "From the mountains of the leopards": namely, the children of Ishmael, who likewise refused, as it is written, "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came from the ten thousands of holy ones" (Deut. XXX, 2).

And what is the meaning of "He came from the ten thousands of holy ones"? An ancient tradition explains it thus: when the Holy One was about to give the Law to Israel, hosts of angels protested with one voice, saying: "O Lord, our lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the earth! Give thy Glory (the Torah) to the heavens!" (Ps. VIII, 1–2). In truth, they desired the Torah for themselves. Said the Holy One to them: "Has death any sway over you? Behold, in My Law death is the punishment for certain sins! Is robbery or theft known to you? In My Law it is written, 'Thou shalt not steal'! Is there sexual desire among you? I have said, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery'! Is it possible for you to lie? I have said, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour'! Can covetousness lodge with you? I have said, 'Thou shalt not covet'! Of what service, then, will the Law be to you?" Straightway they sang in unison: "O Lord, our lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the earth" (*Ibid.* 10). No more did they say, "give Thy glory to the heavens"!'

R. Jose interpreted the above verse in the Song of Songs in connection with the descent of the Shekinah to the Egyptian captivity. R. Simeon, however, found in it an allusion to the mystic union between Voice and Utterance. These should form one unity, without any separation whatever. They depend upon one another: no Voice without Utterance, and no Utterance without Voice. Essentially they both come from "Lebanon" (=*lebanah*, moon, symbolizing Wisdom). "Amana" represents the throat, out of which comes the breath to complete the hidden indication first given from "Lebanon". "From the top of Senir and Hermon" refers to the tongue; "from the lions' dens" suggests the teeth; "from the mountains of the leopards" is symbolic of the lips, by which the Utterance is made complete.

R. Hiya applied to the Israelites who went down to Egypt the verse: "Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainties" (Prov. XXIII, 6). 'Indeed,' he said, 'the bread or any other boon offered by an evil-eyed man is not worth while partaking of or enjoying. Had the children of Israel, in going down into Egypt, not tasted the bread of the Egyptians they would not have remained there

in exile, nor would the Egyptians have oppressed them.' Said R. Isaac: 'Was not that exile the fulfilment of a divine decree?' R. Hiya said in reply: 'That makes no difference, inasmuch as the decree did not mention Egypt in particular, only saying: "Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs" (Gen. XVI, 13)—not necessarily Egypt.' R. Isaac said: 'Though a man should have a vigorous appetite and be a hearty eater, yet if he encounters such an evil-eyed man, it were better for him to take his own life than partake of his bread.'

There are three types of men who drive away the Shekinah from the world, making it impossible for the Holy One, blessed be He, to fix His abode in the universe, and causing prayer to be unanswered. [3b] One is he who cohabits with a woman in the days of her separation. There is no impurity comparable with this. He defiles himself and all connected with him. The child born of such a union is shapen in impurity, imbibes the spirit of impurity, and its whole life is founded on impurity. Next is he who lies with a heathen woman, for he profanes herewith the sacred sign of the covenant which constitutes the support of the sacred Name and the essence of faith. As soon as "the people committed whoredom" with the daughters of Moab, the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel (Num. XXV, 1–3). The leaders of the people, who did not endeavour to prevent them, were the first to be punished (*Ibid.* 4), and in every generation it is the leaders who are made responsible for all the members of the community in regard to the profanation of the sign of the covenant, which is "sun and shield" (Ps. LXXXIV, 12): as the sun gives light to the world, so does the holy sign give light to the body, and as the shield protects, so does the holy sign protect. He who keeps it in purity is guarded from evil. But he who transfers this sign of holiness into a strange domain, breaks the commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods but Me"; for to deny the king's seal is equivalent to denying the king himself. Next is he who purposely prevents the seed from coming to fruition, for he destroys the King's workmanship and so causes the Holy One to depart from the world. This sin is the cause of war,

famine, and pestilence, and it prevents the Shekinah from finding any resting place in the world. For these abominations the spirit of holiness weeps. Woe to him who causes this: it were better that he had never been born. It was counted to the Israelites for righteousness that, although in exile in Egypt, they kept themselves free from these sins, and, moreover, fearlessly fulfilled the command to increase and multiply. This made them worthy to be liberated. R. Hiya found an indication of the purity of the Israelitish women in Egypt in the text: [4a] "And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it brass, of the looking-glasses of the women assembling at the door of the tent" (Ex. XXXVIII, 8). What was the merit of the women to have made them worthy of such honour that their looking-glasses should be used for the laver of the Tabernacle? Their ritual ablutions on the one hand, and their eagerness to attract their husbands on the other.

R. Eleazar and R. Jose were once walking together. Said R. Eleazar to R. Jose: 'Open thy mouth, and let thy words flow forth!' R. Jose replied: 'Will it please the master if I ask him to solve a certain difficulty for me? I have heard from the mouth of the "holy lamp" (R. Simeon b. Yoḥai) this interpretation of the words: "and these are the names of the children of Israel"—that they refer to the "Ancient Israel" (God) and to all the heavenly hosts and chariots who went into captivity with Jacob. I am, however, puzzled how to fit the words "a man and his household" in this verse into this interpretation.' R. Eleazar replied: 'What R. Simeon said is certainly correct. We have an esoteric doctrine that the receiver is, as it were, a "house" to the giver. This may be illustrated from the following verse: "And it came to pass when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord and the king's house" (1 K. IX, 1). "The house of the Lord" is, of course, the Temple, which includes the outer courts, the porch, the antechambers, and the Temple itself: but the "king's house" is not, as you might think, the palace of Solomon, but the Holy of Holies, the innermost sanctum, the word "King" being here used in its absolute sense. For this King, although supreme, is, in relation to the Highest

Point, the most hidden One, feminine, or receptive; but at the same time He is masculine, or active, in relation to the lower King; and this double relationship, to that which is above and that which is below, appertains to the whole supramundane world. It is in this symbolic sense that the angels are here called "his house".'

AND THESE ARE THE NAMES. R. Jose connected these words with the words from the Song of Songs (IV, 12): "A closed garden is my sister bride, a closed spring, a sealed fountain." ' "A closed garden" refers to the Community of Israel, for,' said R. Eleazar, 'as the garden has to be tended, ploughed, watered, and trimmed, so has the Community of Israel to be tended, nurtured, and trimmed. She is called "garden" and she is called "vineyard": "for the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is Israel . . . and he fenced it and gathered out the stones thereof" (Isa. V, 1–7).'

Said R. Simeon:[1]

We open our eyes
And straightway behold
The holy chariot's
Swift-rolling wheels.
Voices of song
Making lovely the air,
A joy to the heart,
A grace to the ear.
Thousand on thousand
To trembling now fall
As they sing and rejoice
From below to above
In tune with the song:
Standing who stand
Joined who are joined
In multitudes thronging,
Four hundred and fifty
Thousands of beings—
Gifted with sight are they
Yet see and see not.
Two hosts them encompass
As great as the first.

[1] This paragraph belongs to the Tosefta.

On the left hand is sorrow,
Is crying and moaning—
The Lords of Weeping
Their dwelling here set;
Their being is judgement,
And chastisement their end.
The Judge is there ready
And the books are open.

At this hour and moment
The Lord of judgement
Ascends to His Throne.
The singing ceases
And silence falls.
Judgement begins.

The Lords of the right hand
Who see and perceive
And eighteen thousand [4b]
Angelic companions
Fearlessly sing
And trumpets ring forth
And a trembling begins.
Once again do thy sound
And the voices are silent.
Then rises the Lord
From the Judgement throne;
On the throne of reconcilement
The Merciful now sits,
And utters the Name—
The holy, the blessed,
Source of mercy for men
And life-giving to all.
"*Yod Hé Vau Hé*" He cries;
Then murmurs anew
The song of the myriads,
Of holy turning wheels.
In ecstasy they chant
"Blessed be the Lord's glory
From the place of His Shekinah".

The secret Garden
In worlds of light hidden
—Two hundred and fifty
Encompassing worlds—
Where Shekinah's splendour
From splendour proceeding

Its splendour sends forth
To the ends of creation,
In the fulness of glory
Is revealed in its beauty
To the eyes made seeing—
The garden of Eden.

The Ancient, the Father,
The Holy One speaks
His Name again pronouncing,
"*Yod Hé Vau Hé*" again
Gloriously crying.
Then speak the lightful Hosts
Making brave music:
His thirteen paths of mercy
They gladly proclaim.

Who sees those mighty ones
High in the Heavens
Mighty in beauty?
Who sees the Chariots
Holy and glorious?
Who sees the Hosts in
The bright courts of glory
Exalting and praising
In awe and in fear
In joy and in wonder
The Holy One's Name?

Blessed are the souls of the righteous who perceive it! "There is none like unto thee, O Lord; thou art great and thy Name is great. Who would not be in awe of thee, thou king of the nations?" (Jer. x, 6–7).

Said R. Simeon: 'When the Shekinah went down to Egypt, a celestial "living being" (*Ḥayah*, cf. Ezek. 1, 5), called "Israel", in form like the patriarch Jacob, went down with Her, accompanied by forty-two heavenly attendants, each of whom bore a letter belonging to the Holy Name. They all descended with Jacob to Egypt, and hence it says "and these are the *names* of the children of Israel which came into Egypt . . . with Jacob".'

R. Judah asked R. Eleazar, the son of R. Simeon: 'As thou hast heard from thy father the mystical interpretation

of this section of the Book of Exodus, tell me the significance of the words "a man and his household came with Jacob".' He replied: 'My father said that it refers to the various grades of angels, all of them celestial, but of whom the higher are called "men", and the lower "household" or "female", in the sense that the former are active while the latter are passive and receptive.'

When R. Isaac was once studying with R. Eleazar, the son of R. Simeon, he asked him: 'Did the Shekinah go down to Egypt with Jacob?' Said R. Eleazar: 'Surely! Did not God say to Jacob, "I will go down with thee into Egypt" (Gen. XLVI, 4)?' Said R. Isaac: 'See now, the Shekinah went down with Jacob into Egypt, but She also had with Her six hundred thousand holy Chariots (angelic beings), for it is written, "and the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about (lit. like) six hundred thousand on foot" (Ex. XII, 37). Now it does not say "six hundred", but "like" six hundred, etc., which suggests that there was an equal number of celestial beings who went out with them. The deeper meaning of the passage is as follows. When these holy Chariots and holy Hosts were about to leave Egypt, the children of Israel at once realized that it was for their sake that the celestial beings were detained, and therefore they hastened to get ready and leave as quickly as possible. Hence it says "they could not tarry" (Ex. XII, 39), not "they did not want to tarry". From this we learn that the expression "children of Israel" in all these passages refers to the celestial hosts. Moreover, it stands to reason that, as the Holy One promised Jacob that He would go down with him into Egypt, He would take His ministering angels with Him, for where the Master is there must His servants also be, and especially when we consider that even when Jacob was saved from Laban, "the angels of God met him" (Gen. XXXII, 2).'

[5a] R. Abba cited here the verse: "Come, behold the works of the Lord who hath made desolations in the earth" (Ps. XLVI, 8). 'The term *shammoth* (desolations)', he said, 'can also be read *shemoth* (names). This corroborates what R. Hiya said, namely, that whatever is in heaven, the Holy One, blessed be He, has made a counterpart thereof on earth.

Thus, as there are hallowed names in heaven, so there are hallowed names on earth.' Said R. Jose: 'When Jacob went down to Egypt, sixty myriads of celestial angels accompanied him.' R. Judah illustrated from the verse: "Behold, it is the couch of Solomon, threescore mighty men are about it, of the mighty men of Israel" (S.S. III, 7), which he expounded thus: 'Six luminosities form a circle surrounding a seventh luminosity in the centre. The six on the circumference sustain the sixty valiant angels surrounding the "couch of Solomon". The "couch" is an allusion to the Shekinah, and "Solomon" refers to the "King to whom peace (*shalom*) belongs": "threescore mighty men are about it"—these are the sixty myriads of exalted angels, part of the army of the Shekinah which accompanied Jacob into Egypt.'

R. Hiya was once travelling from Usha to Lud, mounted on an ass, and R. Jose accompanied him on foot. R. Hiya dismounted, took R. Jose by the hand, and said: 'If men only knew what great honour was shown to Jacob when the Holy One said to him, "I will go down with thee to Egypt", they would lick the dust for three parasangs distance from his grave! For it has been said by the great Rabbis of old in connection with the verse, "And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance" (Ex. XVIII, 7), that when Aaron saw Moses go, he also went, and so did Eleazar, and the princes, and the elders, and, in fact, all Israel went out to meet Jethro. For who could see Moses or the great ones go and not go himself? Thus because Moses went, all went. Now if Moses produced such an effect, how much more must God have done so when He said to Jacob "I will go down with thee to Egypt"?' As they were going along, R. Abba met them. Said R. Jose: 'Behold, the Shekinah is in our midst, as we have a great master of doctrine with us.' Said R. Abba: 'What were you discussing?' R. Jose replied: 'We were deducing that the angels went down with Israel to Egypt from the two verses "I will come down with thee into Egypt" and "These are the names, etc.".' Said R. Abba: 'I will give you a third. It says, "The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel . . . in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar" (Ezek. I, 3). Ezekiel, it is said, could not

have been as faithful as Moses, of whom it is written, "He is faithful in all my house", for he revealed all the treasures of the King. But we have been instructed to beware of such thoughts about this prophet; on the contrary, he was a worthy prophet, and what he revealed he revealed with the permission of the Holy One, and he might have disclosed twice as much, because of the sad condition in which Israel found herself in Babylon, as has been explained already, and he had to prove to them that the Holy One would never leave His people in captivity without His Presence. Thus it goes without saying that when Jacob went down to Egypt, the Holy One, and His Shekinah, and all the holy heavenly beings, and all the Chariots, went down with him.' [5b]

R. Judah said: 'If men only knew the love which God bears for Israel, they would roar like a lion till they could follow her! For when Jacob went down to Egypt, the Holy One called together all His celestial Family and said: "All of you must go down to Egypt, and I shall come with you!" Said the Shekinah: "Can hosts remain without a king?" Said He to Her: "Come with me from Lebanon, bride! With me from Lebanon! Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards" (S.S. IV, 8), i.e. "Come with Me from the Sanctuary above! Look from the tops of those who are the heads of the "Sons of Faith" (*amanah—emunah*)! Behold, they are about to receive from the mountain Hermon My Torah, which will be their shield in exile! Come from the lions' dens, the mountains of the leopards—the heathen nations who torment them with all manner of oppression".' R. Isaac applied the words, "Look from the top of Amana" to the Sanctuary above and to the Sanctuary below, according to the dictum of R. Judah, that the Shekinah never departed from the Western wall of the Temple. R. Judah applied the words, "From the lions' dens, etc.", to students of the Torah in the *dens*, i.e. in the synagogues and houses of study.

R. Hiya, as he was once studying with R. Simeon, asked him: 'Why does the Torah, in this passage (Ex. I, 1–5), besides giving the total number of seventy souls, enumerate the twelve tribes by name? And further, why seventy?'

R. Simeon replied: 'In order to bring out the contrast between the *one* nation and the *seventy* nations of the Gentiles in the world. What is more,' he went on, 'the principalities that preside over the seventy nations issue from twelve axes that stretch out to all points of the compass. This is the significance of the words, "He set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. XXXII, 8), and "For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of heaven" (Zech. II, 6): as the world cannot be without the four cardinal points, so cannot the nations be without Israel.'

NOW THERE AROSE UP A NEW KING OVER EGYPT. R. Abba cited here the verse: *Blessed are ye who sow above all waters, that send forth the feet of the ox and the ass* (Isa. XXXII, 20). He said: 'Blessed are the children of Israel whom God hath chosen above all nations and brought near to Himself, as it is written, "The Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself" (Deut. XIV, 2), and again, "For the Lord's portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (*Ibid.* XXXII, 9). Israel cleaves to the Holy One, blessed be He, as it says "And ye who cleave to the Lord your God, ye are all alive [6a] to-day" (*Ibid.* IV, 4). They are worthy, in His sight, because they "sow above (*'al*) all waters", that is to say, they sow "according to righteousness" (Hos. X, 12), for of him who sows according to righteousness it is said: "For thy mercy is great above (*'al*) the heavens" (Ps. CVIII, 5). "Above the heavens" is identical with "above all waters", and refers to the world to come, and Israel sow a seed which is above all waters. The Book of R. Yeba the Elder remarks as follows: It is written "The matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones" (Dan. IV, 14). All the judgements passed upon the world, and all decrees and decisions are stored in a certain palace, where seventy-two members of Sanhedrin deliberate upon them. The palace is called " the Palace of Acquittal", because the judges there lay stress on whatever can be pleaded in favour of the accused. Not so the "other side", where there is a place called "Accusation", because in that

abode of the Serpent, the "Wife of whoredom", every effort is made to procure the condemnation of humanity, and to prejudice the servant in the eyes of the Master. Symbolically, the former is represented by "sweet, clear water"; the latter by "bitter water that causes the curse" (Num. v, 18). The decision concerning children, life, and livelihood, however, is not entrusted either to the "Temple of Acquittal" or to that of "Accusation" (being dependent on *mazzal*). Israel therefore, "sow above all waters", since their seed is established above. Further, they send away "the feet of the ox and the ass", i.e. the evil haps which are symbolized by the union of the ox and the ass (cf. Zohar, Gen., 162b), and cleave to the "good side" of the supernal holy beings.

'It says in the Book of R. Hamnuna the Elder, in connection with the words, "Now there arose a new king over Egypt", that all the nations of the world and all their kings become powerful only on account of Israel. Egypt, for instance, did not rule over the whole world before Israel settled there. The same is true of Babylon, as well as of Edom (Rome). Before that all these nations were utterly insignificant and contemptible: Egypt is described as a "house of slaves" (Ex. xx, 2), Babylon as "a people who was not" (Isa. xx, 11–13), and of Edom it says, "Behold, I have made thee small among the nations,thou art greatly despised" (Obad. 1, 2). It was entirely due to Israel that they became great. As soon as Israel was subjected to any of these nations, it immediately became all-powerful, since Israel singly are on a par with all the rest of the world. So when Israel went down to Egypt, straightway that country rose to supreme power. And this is the meaning of "Now there arose a new king", i.e. the supernal chieftain of Egypt rose up in strength and gained predominance over the chieftains of the other nations. [6b] Then the words were fulfilled: "For three things the earth is disquieted . . . for a servant when he reigneth. . . ." (Prov. xxx, 21).'

R. Hiya said: 'Thirty days before a nation rises to power or before its downfall in this world, the event is proclaimed in the other world. Sometimes it is revealed through the mouths of little children, sometimes through simple folk, and sometimes through a bird. These proclaim it in the world, and yet no one notices them. If, however, a nation is deserving, the impending calamity is revealed to the righteous leaders of the people, in order that they may call the people to repent and return to the Lord while there is yet time.'

As R. Eleazar was sitting one day at the gate of Lydda along with R. Abba, R. Judah, and R. Jose, R. Jose said: 'Listen, and I will tell you the sights which I have seen this morning. I rose early and beheld a bird which flew up three times and down once, exclaiming: "Ye celestials, ye angels of the higher sphere ! In these days three heavenly Chieftains are raising up rulers on the earth. One is dislodged from his throne and made to pass through the Fiery Stream. He and his power are annihilated. But three mighty pillars of great height still stand upon the world." I threw a stone at the bird and cried: "Bird, bird ! Tell me, who are the three who remain upright and the one whose power is taken from him ?" He threw down to me three feathers from his right wing and one from his left wing. I know not what it all portends.' R. Eleazar took from R. Jose the feathers, smelt them, and lo, blood issued from his nostrils. Said he: 'Verily, three great rulers are now at Rome, and are about to bring evil upon Israel through the Romans.' Then he took the feather of the left wing, smelt it, and behold, black fire burst from it. He said: 'The power of the Egyptians is coming to an end; a Roman king is about to pass through the whole land of Egypt, appoint governors over it, and destroy buildings and erect new ones.' Then he threw the feathers on to the ground, and the three which were from the right wing fell on that which was from the left wing. As they were thus sitting, a young child passed by and recited the verse: "A burden concerning Egypt ! Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt" (Isa. xix, 1). A second child passed by and declaimed: "And the land of Egypt shall be desolate" (Ezek. xxix, 9). A third child passed by and recited: "Make thee instruments of captivity, O daughter of Egypt !" (Jer. xlvi, 19). Then they saw that the feather of the left wing was burning, but not the three feathers of the right

wing. Said R. Eleazar: 'These two incidents, that of the bird and that of the children, are in truth but one—and they convey a prophecy from above. The Holy One, blessed be He, desired to reveal to us His hidden plans, as it is written, "Behold, the Lord will do nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets" (Amos. III, 7). And the wise are greater than prophets, for on the prophets the holy spirit rests intermittently, but the wise He never leaves, as, although they know what is above and what is below, they keep it secret.' Said R. Jose: 'There are many wise, but the wisdom of R. Eleazar exceeds all.' Said R. Abba: 'If it were not for the sages the sons of men would comprehend neither God's Torah nor His commandments, and the spirit of man would not differ from the spirit of the beasts.' R. Isaac said: 'When the Holy One is about to chastise a nation He chastises first its celestial representative, as it is written, "The Lord shall punish the host of heaven in heaven and the kings of the earth upon the earth" (Isa. XXIV, 21). And what does the punishment consist in? He has to pass through the Fiery Stream, and then his power vanishes. Straightway it is proclaimed above, [7a] and the proclamation resounds in all the heavens and reaches the ears of those who have dominion over this world. From them it issues and traverses the world, until it reaches birds and little children and simple-minded folk.'

NOW THERE AROSE A NEW KING OVER EGYPT. According to R. Ḥiya he was really a new king, but according to R. Jose it was the same Pharaoh, only he made "new" decrees against Israel, forgetting all the benefits bestowed upon him by Joseph, as if "he did not know him".

R. Jose and R. Judah were once studying with R. Simeon. Said R. Judah: 'We have been taught that the expression "arose" suggests that Pharaoh "rose" on his own accord, viz. that he was not in the line of Egyptian kings, and was, in fact, not worthy to be king; he "rose" only because he was rich.' Said R. Simeon: 'Exactly as was the case with Ahasuerus, who also was not fitted for the kingship, but obtained it through his wealth.'

R. Eleazar, R. Abba, and R. Jose were once walking from Tiberias to Sepphoris. On the way they met a Jew who started a conversation by quoting: "A burden upon Egypt. Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud and cometh into Egypt, and the godlings of Egypt shall flee from his presence" (Isa. XIX, 1). 'Mark this,' he said. 'All the kings and all the nations of the world are as nothing before the Holy One, blessed be He (Dan. IV, 32). He only has to decide a thing and it is done. What, then, is the significance of the expression "cometh into Egypt"? Did He have to "come"? Yea, verily, He "came" for the sake of the Matrona (Shekinah), to take Her, as it were, by the hand and raise Her in glory, as He will also do when Israel's captivity in Edom (Rome) will come to an end.' R. Jose remarked: 'If it was for the sake of the Matrona, why did He not "come" to Babylon, where the Shekinah was also in exile with Israel?' To this the Jew replied that according to tradition the reason why the Holy One did not reveal Himself fully by signs and wonders in Babylon was because the Israelites took to themselves foreign wives and profaned the sign of the holy Covenant. In Egypt, however, it was different: they entered it as pure sons of Israel, and left it as such. When the Edomitic exile comes to an end He shall manifest His glory in fulness and raise up His Spouse from the dust, saying to her: "Shake thyself from the dust; arise, sit down, O Jerusalem, loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion" (Isa. LII, 2). Who shall then stand against Him? It is written "And the godlings of Egypt shall flee from His presence." The "godlings" are not merely idols made of stone and wood, but celestial principalities and terrestrial divinities. Indeed, wherever Israel is in exile the Holy One watches them and demands an account from those peoples and their supernal representatives. Mark what is written! "Thus says the Lord, my people went down at the first to Egypt to sojourn there, and Assyria oppressed them for nothing" (*Ibid.* v. 4). The Holy One had a grave complaint against Assyria. "Behold what Assyria has done to me! Egypt I punished severely, although she treated my people with hospitality when they came to sojourn there, assigning to them the fat of the land, the land

of Goshen; and even later, though they oppressed them, they did not take away the land from them nor anything belonging to them" (cf. Ex. IX, 6). But Assyria "oppressed them for nothing": they dragged [7b] them to the other end of the earth and took their country away from them." Now if Egypt was punished, notwithstanding the kindness with which she treated Israel, especially at first, it can certainly be expected that Assyria and Edom, and, in fact, all the nations who have maltreated Israel, will receive their punishment from the Holy One, when He will manifest the glory of His Name to them, as it is written, "Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself, and I will be known among many nations" (Ezek. XXXVIII, 23).

R. Simeon lifted up his hands and wept. 'Alas,' he said, 'for him who will live at that time! Yet happy he who will live at that time! When the Holy One comes to visit the "Hind" (Israel), he will examine who it is that remains loyal to her at that time, and then woe to him who shall not be found worthy, and of whom it shall be said, "I looked and there was none to help" (Isa. LXII, 23). Many sufferings shall then befall Israel. But happy he who will be found faithful at that time! For he shall see the joy-giving light of the King. Concerning that time it is proclaimed: "I will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried" (Zech. XIII, 9). Then shall pangs and travail overtake Israel, and all nations and their kings shall furiously rage together and take counsel against her. Thereupon a pillar of fire will be suspended from heaven to earth for forty days, visible to all nations. Then the Messiah will arise from the Garden of Eden, from that place which is called "The Bird's Nest". He will arise in the land of Galilee, and on that day the whole world shall be shaken and all the children of men shall seek refuge in caves and rocky places. Concerning that time it is written: "And they shall go into the holes of the rocks and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isa. II, 19). "The glory of his majesty" refers to the Messiah when he shall reveal himself in the land of Galilee; for in this part of the Holy Land the

desolation first began, and therefore he will manifest himself there first, and from there begin to war against the world. After the forty days, during which the pillar shall have stood between heaven and earth before the eyes of the whole world, and the Messiah shall have manifested himself, a star shall come forth from the East variegated in hue and shining brilliantly, and seven other stars shall surround it, and make war on it from all sides, three times a day for seventy days, before the eyes of the whole world. The one star shall fight against the seven with rays of fire flashing on every side, and it shall smite them until they are extinguished, evening after evening. But in the day they will appear again and fight before the eyes of the whole world, seventy days long. After the seventy days the one star shall vanish. Also the Messiah shall be hidden for twelve months in the pillar of fire, which shall return again, although it shall not be visible. After the twelve months the Messiah will be carried up to heaven in that pillar of fire and receive there power and dominion and the royal crown. When he descends, the pillar of fire will again be visible to the eyes of the world, and the Messiah will reveal himself, and mighty nations will gather round him, and he shall declare war against all the world. At that time the Holy One shall show forth his power before all the nations of the earth, and the Messiah shall be manifested throughout the whole universe, and all the kings will unite to fight against him, and even in Israel there will be found some wicked ones who shall join them in the fight against the Messiah. Then there will be darkness over all the world, and for fifteen days shall it continue, and many in Israel shall perish in that darkness. Concerning this darkness it is written: "Behold, darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the peoples" (Isa. LX, 2).'

R. Simeon then discoursed on the verse: [8a] "If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young . . . thou shalt in no wise let the dam go" (Deut. XXII, 6–7). 'This passage', he said, 'we interpret as an esoteric commandment in the Law, containing mysteries of doctrine, paths and ways known to the Fellowship and

belonging to the thirty-two paths of the Torah.' Then, turning to R. Eleazar, his son, he said: 'At the time when the Messiah shall arise, there will be great wonders in the world. See now, in the lower Paradise there is a secret and unknown spot, broidered with many colours, in which a thousand palaces of longing are concealed. No one may enter it, except the Messiah, whose abode is in Paradise. The Garden is encompassed with multitudes of saints who look to the Messiah as their leader, along with many hosts and bands of the souls of the righteous there. On New Moons, festivals, and Sabbaths, he enters that place, in order to find joyous delight in those secret palaces. Behind those palaces there is another place, entirely hidden and undiscoverable. It is called "Eden", and no one may enter to behold it. Now the Messiah is hidden in its outskirts until a place is revealed to him which is called "the Bird's Nest". This is the place proclaimed by that Bird (the Shekinah) which flies about the Garden of Eden every day. In that place the effigies are woven of all the nations who band together against Israel. The Messiah enters that abode, lifts up his eyes and beholds the Fathers (Patriarchs) visiting the ruins of God's Sanctuary. He perceives mother Rachel, with tears upon her face; the Holy One, blessed be He, tries to comfort her, but she refuses to be comforted (Jer. XXXI, 14). Then the Messiah lifts up his voice and weeps, and the whole Garden of Eden quakes, and all the righteous and saints who are there break out in crying and lamentation with him. When the crying and weeping resound for the second time, the whole firmament above the Garden begins to shake, and the cry echoes from five hundred myriads of supernal hosts, until it reaches the highest Throne. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, beckons to that "Bird", which then enters its nest and comes to the Messiah, and flits about, uttering strange cries. Then from the holy Throne the Bird's Nest and the Messiah are summoned three times, and they both ascend into the heavenly places, and the Holy One swears to them to destroy the wicked kingdom (Rome) by the hand of the Messiah, to avenge Israel, and to give her all the good things which he has promised her. Then the Bird returns

to her place. The Messiah, however, is hidden again in the same place as before.

'At the time when the Holy One shall arise to renew all worlds, and the letters of his Name shall shine in perfect union, the *Yod* with the *Hé*, and the *Hé* with the *Vau*, a mighty star will appear in the heavens of purple hue, which by day shall flame before the eyes of the whole world, filling the firmament with its light. And at that time shall a flame issue in the heavens from the north; and flame and star shall so face each other for forty days, and all men will marvel and be afraid. And when forty days shall have passed, the star and the flame shall war together in the sight of all, and the flame shall spread across the skies from the north, striving to overcome the star, and the rulers and peoples of the earth shall behold it with terror, and there will be confusion among them. But the star will remove to the south and vanquish the flame, and the flame shall daily be diminished until it be no more seen. Then shall the star cleave for itself bright paths in twelve directions which shall remain luminous in the skies for the term of twelve days. After a further twelve days trembling will seize the world, and at midday the sun will be darkened as it was darkened on the day when the holy Temple was destroyed, so that heaven and earth shall not be seen. Then out of the midst of thunder and lightning shall a voice be heard, causing the earth to quake and many hosts and principalities to perish. On the same day when that voice is heard throughout the world, a flame of fire shall appear burning in Great Rome (Constantinople); [8b] it will consume many turrets and towers, and many are the great and mighty who shall perish then. All shall gather against her to destroy her, and no one will have hope to escape. From that day on, for twelve months, all the kings (of the world) will take counsel together and make many decrees to destroy Israel; and they shall prosper against him, as has been said. Blessed is he who shall live in that time, and blessed is he who shall not live in that time! And the whole world then will be in confusion. At the end of the twelve months the "sceptre of Judah", namely the Messiah, will arise, appearing from Paradise, and all the righteous will

surround him and gird him with weapons of war on which are inscribed the letters of the Holy Name (Tetragrammaton). Then a voice will burst forth from the branches of the trees of Paradise: "Arise, O ye saints from above, and stand ye before the Messiah! For the time has come for the Hind to be united with her Spouse, and he must avenge her on the world and raise her from the dust". And all the saints from above will arise and gird the Messiah with weapons of war, Abraham at his right, Isaac at his left, Jacob in front of him, while Moses, the "faithful shepherd" of all these saints, shall dance at the head of them in Paradise. As soon as the Messiah has been installed by the saints in Paradise, he will enter again the place which is called "the Bird's Nest", there to behold the picture of the destruction of the Temple, and of all the saints who were done to death there. Then will he take from that place ten garments, the garments of holy zeal, and hide himself there for forty days, and no one shall be able to see him. At the end of those forty days a voice shall be heard from the highest throne calling the Bird's Nest and the Messiah who shall be hidden there. Thereupon he shall be carried aloft, and when the Holy One, blessed be He, shall behold the Messiah adorned with the garments of holy zeal and girded with weapons of war, he will take him and kiss him upon his brow. At that moment three hundred and ninety firmaments shall begin to shake. The Holy One shall command one of these firmaments, which has been kept in waiting since the six days of creation, to approach, and He shall take out from a certain temple in it a crown inscribed with holy names. It was with this crown that the Holy One adorned Himself when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and He avenged Himself on all the chariots of Pharaoh and his horsemen. With this same crown will He crown King Messiah. As soon as he is crowned, the Holy One will take him and kiss him as before. All the holy multitude and the whole holy army will surround him and will bestow upon him many wonderful gifts, and he will be adorned by them all. Then will he enter into one of the temples and behold there all the upper angels, who are called "the mourners of Zion" because they continually weep over

the destruction of the Holy Temple. These angels shall give him a robe of deep red in order that he may commence his work of revenge. The Holy One will again hide him in the "Bird's Nest" and he will remain there for thirty days. After the thirty days he will again be decked with those adornments from above and from below, and many holy beings will surround him. The whole world then shall see a light extending from the firmament to the earth, and continuing for seven days, and they will be amazed and not comprehend: only the wise will understand, they who are adepts in the mystic lore, blessed is their portion. All through the seven days the Messiah shall be crowned on earth. Where shall this be? "By the way", to wit, Rachel's grave, which is on the cross-road. To mother Rachel he will give glad tidings and comfort her, and now she will let herself be comforted, and will rise and kiss him. The light will then move from that place and shall stand over Jericho, the city of trees, and the Messiah will be hidden in the light of the "Bird's Nest" for twelve months. After the twelve months that light will stand between heaven and earth in the land of Galilee, where Israel's captivity began, and there will he reveal himself from the light of the "Bird's Nest", and return to his place. On that day the whole earth will be shaken from one end [90a] to the other, and thus the whole world will know that the Messiah has revealed himself in the land of Galilee. And all who are diligent in the study of the Torah—and there shall be few such in the world—will gather round him. His army will gain in strength through the merit of little infants at school, symbolized by the word *eghroah*—"young bird" (cf. Deut. XXII, 6). And if such will not be found at that time it will be through the merit of the sucklings, "the eggs" (*Ibid.*), "those that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts" (Isa. XXII, 9), for whose sake the Shekinah dwells in the midst of Israel in exile, as indeed there will be few sages at that time. This is the implication of the words "And the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs", which, allegorically interpreted, means that it does not depend upon the Mother to free them from exile, but upon the Supreme King; for it is the young ones and the sucklings

that will give strength to the Messiah, and then the Supernal Mother, which "sits upon them", will be stirred up towards Her Spouse. He will tarry for twelve months longer, and then he will appear and raise her from the dust: "I will raise up on that day the tabernacle of David that is fallen" (Amos IX, 11). On that day the Messiah will begin to gather the captives from one end of the world to the other: "If any of thine be driven out unto the utmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee" (Deut. XXX, 4). From that day on the Holy One will perform for Israel all the signs and wonders which He performed for them in Egypt: "As in the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt, will I show unto him wonders" (Micah VII, 15).'

Then said R. Simeon: 'Eleazar, my son! Thou canst find all this in the mystery of the thirty-two paths of the Holy Name. Before these wonders have taken place in the world, the mystery of the Holy Name will not be manifested in perfection and love will not be awakened: "Ye daughters of Jerusalem, I adjure you by the gazelles and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake the love until she pleases" (Cant II, 7). The "gazelles" (*zebaoth*) symbolize the king, who is called Zebaoth; the "hinds" represent those other principalities and powers from below; "that ye stir not up, etc." refers to the "Right Hand" of the Holy One, called "Love"; "until she pleases", namely She (the Shekinah) who lies at present in the dust and in whom the King is well pleased. Blessed be he who will be found worthy to live at that time! Blessed will he be both in this world and in the world to come.'

R. Simeon then lifted up his hands in prayer to the Holy One, blessed be He. When he had finished his prayer, R. Eleazar his son and R. Abba seated themselves before him. As they were thus sitting they beheld the light of the day grow dim and a fiery flame sink in the Sea of Tiberias, and the whole place began mightily to tremble. Said R. Simeon: 'Verily, this is the time when the Holy One remembers His children and lets two drops fall into the great Sea. As they fall they meet the fiery ray and sink with it in the sea.' Then R. Simeon wept, and the disciples also. Said R. Simeon:

'Behold, I was moved a while ago to meditate on the mystery of the letters of the Holy Name, the mystery of His compassion over His children; but now it is fitting that I should reveal unto this generation something that no other man has been permitted to reveal. For the merit of this generation sustains the world until the Messiah shall appear.' He then bade R. Eleazar his son and R. Abba to stand up, and they did so. R. Simeon then wept a second time, and said: 'Alas! Who can endure to hear what I foresee! The exile will drag on; who shall be able to bear it?'

Then he also rose and spake thus: 'It is written, "O Lord our God, other lords beside thee dominated us, apart from thee do we make mention of thy Name" (Isa. XXVI, 13). This verse, apart from other interpretations, contains a profound doctrine of faith. *Yhvh Elohenu* (Lord our God) is the source and beginning of supreme mysteries indeed; it is the sphere whence emanate all the burning lights, and where the whole mystery of Faith is centred: this Name dominates all. However, "other lords beside thee dominated us"; the people of Israel, who is destined to be ruled only by this supreme Name, is ruled in exile by the "other side". Yea, "apart from thee (*beka*) do we make mention of thy name". The name "by thee" *BeKa* (=22) symbolizes the Holy Name comprising twenty-two letters, and this is the name by which the Community of Israel is always blessed, as, for instance, "to whom thou swarest by thine own self" (*beka*, Ex. XXII, 13); "in thee (*beka*) shall Israel be blessed" (Gen. XLVIII, 20); "for in thee (*beka*) I can run through the troops" (Ps. XVIII, 19). At the period when there is perfection, peace, and harmony, the two names are not separated one from another, and it is forbidden [9b] to separate them even in thought and imagination; but now in exile we do separate them, the Matrona from Her Spouse, as She (Shekinah) lies in dust (in exile with Israel). "Apart from thee" being far away from Thee, and being ruled by other powers, "we make mention of thy name" in separation, thy Name being separated from the Name expressed by *Beka*. All this in the days of exile; for the first exile began during the first Temple, and lasted seventy years, during which time the Mother (the

Shekinah) did not brood over Israel, and there was a separation between the *Yod* and the *Hé*, the *Yod* ascending higher and higher to infinity (*En Sof*), and the holy Temple above—corresponding to the Temple below—did not send forth living waters, its source being cut off. The seventy years of the first exile corresponded to the seven years which it took to build the first Temple (1 K. VI, 38). However, far be it from us to think that during that time the kingdom of Babylon had power in the heavens over Israel. The fact is that as long as the Temple stood there was a bright light descending from the Supernal Mother, but as soon as it was destroyed, through Israel's sin, and the kingdom of Babylon got the upper hand, that light was covered up and darkness prevailed here below and the angels below ceased from giving out light, and then the power symbolized by the letter *Yod* of the Holy Name ascended into the upper regions, into the Infinite, and thus during the whole seventy years of exile Israel had no divine light to guide her, and, truly, that was the essence of the exile. When, however, Babylon's power was taken away from her and Israel returned to the Holy Land, a light did shine for her, but it was not as bright as before, being only the emanation of the lower *Hé*, since the whole of Israel did not return to purity to be a "peculiar people" as before. Therefore, the emanation of the supernal *Yod* did not descend to illumine in the same measure as before, but only a little. Hence Israel were involved in many wars until "the darkness covered the earth" and the lower *Hé* was darkened and fell to the ground, and the upper source was removed as before, and the second Temple was destroyed and all its twelve tribes went into exile in the kingdom of Edom. The *Hé* also went into exile there, and therefore the exile was prolonged.

'A mystery of mysteries has been revealed to them that are wise of heart. The *Hé* of the second Temple is in exile with her twelve tribes and their hosts. Twelve tribes form a great number, and because the mystery of the *Hé* is in them, the exile lasts during this whole number. Ten tribes are a thousand years, two tribes are two hundred years. At the conclusion of the twelve tribes (twelve hundred years) there

will be darkness over Israel, until the *Vau* shall arise at the time of sixty-six years after the "twelve tribes", that is, after twelve hundred years of exile. And after the conclusion of the sixty-six years of the night-darkness, the words "And I shall remember my covenant with Jacob" (Lev. XXVI, 42) will begin to come to pass. From then the Holy One, blessed be He, shall begin to do signs and wonders, [102] as we have described. But over Israel those tribulations will come. After that King Messiah shall fight against the whole world, aided by the Right Hand of the Holy One. At the end of another sixty-six years the letters in the Holy Name shall be seen perfectly engraved above and below in manner due. After a further one hundred and thirty-two years He will begin "to take hold of the ends of the earth and shake off the wicked". The Holy Land will be purified, and the Holy One will raise the dead there and they shall rise in their hosts in the land of Galilee. At the end of a further hundred and forty-four years the remaining dead of Israel in other lands shall be raised, so that after altogether four hundred and eight years the world shall be re-inhabited and the evil principle (the "other side") driven out of it. Then the lower *Hé* (Shekinah) shall be filled from the upper spring (the highest Sephiroth), and be crowned and radiate in perfection until the Sabbath of the Lord arrives to gather souls in the joy of holiness throughout this whole seventh millennium. Then the holy spirits of the people of Israel at the fulness of time will be invested with new, holy bodies, and be called "Saints": "And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion and that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy" (Isa. III, 4). These are the veiled mysteries.'[1]

[1] The above calculation of the Messianic era rests on the supposition that of the seven millenniums of the present æon, the seventh is to be considered as the Cosmic Sabbath, the sixth as the time of the Messiah, the fifth as the last (Edomitic or Roman) exile. The beginning of this exile is, according to the Zohar, 3828 years after Creation, hence with those 1200 years of exile the fifth millennium is completed. Sixty-six years later, i.e. 5066 years after Creation (1306 C.E.), the signs of Redemption begin. 298 years later, i.e. 5364 after Creation (1504 C.E.), follows the "first resurrection", the second 144 years later, i.e. 1648 C.E. In the year 2240 the apocalyptic Sabbath begins. Cf. also Zohar, Gen. 116b, Deut. 249a.

THERE AROSE UP A NEW KING. Said R. Jose: 'The Holy One creates each day new angels to be His emissaries to the world, as it is written, "He maketh his angels winds" (spirits) (Ps. CIV. 4). It does not say "He made", but "He maketh", because He makes them daily. At that time He appointed one to represent Egypt: "a new king", i.e. a new supernal representative; "who knew not Joseph", because Egypt's angel emanated from the sphere of Separation: since of the four "heads" into which the river that went out of Eden parted (Gen. II, 10), the first was the stream of Egypt (the Nile above, corresponding to the Nile below); and therefore "he knew not Joseph", who represents the sphere where is the abode of Unity, and which is called "Righteous".'

R. Eleazar and R. Jose once set forth upon a journey at dawn. Suddenly they beheld two stars which shot across the sky from either side. Said R. Eleazar: 'The time is now come when the morning stars do praise their Master: shooting forth in awe across the heavens, they prepare to glorify His Name in song, as it is written: "When the morning stars sing together" (Job XXXVIII, 7). Verily they sing in perfect unison, and in harmony do the sons of God shout for joy.' He then discoursed on the verse: *To the musician. Upon the hind of the morning. A song of David* (Ps. XXII, 1). 'When the face of the east lightens', he said, 'and the darkness of the night is dispersed, an angel appears in the east, and from the south he draws a thread of light, and then the sun comes forth and, throwing open the casements of the sky, illumines the world. Then the "hind of the morning" comes, a red light enters into the darkness and it becomes day. And the light of the day draws that "hind" into itself. Now it is concerning that "hind" when it separates itself from the day, after it had been with it, that David sang. And the following verse—[106b] "My God (*Eli*), my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—suggests the cry over the "hind (*ayala*) of the morning", when she separates herself from the day.'

As they were thus walking, the day lightened and the time for prayer arrived. Said R. Eleazar: 'Let us pray, and then continue our journey.' They sat down and prayed, and then resumed their walk. On the way, R. Eleazar started to

expound the following verse: *There is a vanity* (*hebel*, lit. breath) *which is done upon the earth, that there be righteous men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again there are wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also is vanity* (Eccl. VIII, 14). 'This verse', he said, 'has been esoterically explained as follows. King Solomon, in this book, treated of seven "vanities" (*habalim*, lit. breaths) upon which the world stands, namely the seven pillars[1] which sustain the world in correspondence with the seven firmaments, which are called respectively *Vilon*, *Rakia*, *Shehakim*, *Zebul*, *Ma'on*, *Machon*, *Araboth*. It was concerning them that Solomon said: "Vanity of vanities, said Koheleth, all is vanity" (*Ibid.* I, 1). As there are seven firmaments, with others cleaving to them and issuing from them, so there are seven *habalim* and others emanating from these, and Solomon in his wisdom referred to them all to convey the following esoteric lesson. There is a certain "breath"[2] emanating from those supernal "breaths" upon which the world is sustained, closely connected with the earth and fed from it. It depends, in fact, on the souls of the righteous who have been gathered from the earth while still pure before they have committed any sin, and while their savour is still sweet: for instance, Enoch, of whom it is written, "And he was not, for God took him" (Gen. V, 24). God took him away before his time and had delight in him. And so it is with all the righteous, for we have been taught that the righteous are removed from this world before their time for one of two reasons: one for the sins of their generation, for when there is much sin in the world the righteous are penalized for its guilt; the second is that when the Holy One, blessed be He, is aware that they would commit a sin if they lived longer, He removes them before their time. And this is the meaning of the verse quoted above: "there are righteous to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked", as was the case with R. Akiba and his colleagues; the judgement from above came upon them, as if they had committed the sins and actions of the wicked. On the other hand, "there are wicked

[1] i.e. *Sefiroth*. [2] *Malkuth*.

men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous": they live in peace and comfort in this world, and the judgement does not come upon them, as if they performed the deeds of the righteous. Why so? Because the Holy One foresees that either they are about to repent, or that they will bring forth virtuous offspring, as, for instance, Terah, who brought forth Abraham, and Ahaz, who brought forth Hezekiah. Thus, as we have said, there is a "breath" (*hebel*) on one side as well as on the other, a "breath is made upon the earth" in order that the world may be sustained.

'Another interpretation of the verse is as follows. "Vanity is done upon the earth", for instance, when a "work of the wicked", the temptation to commit some sin, approaches the righteous and they remain steadfast in the fear of their Lord and refuse to defile themselves, like so many of whom we know who did the will of their Master and sinned not. On the other hand, "it happeneth that wicked men do the works of the righteous" on certain occasions, as, for instance, the Jew who belonged to a gang of robbers on a mountain, and who, whenever he saw a fellow Jew pass, warned him of the danger, so that R. Akiba applied to him the words of the second half of this verse; or the man [11a] in the neighbourhood of R. Hiya who once seized a woman with the intention of violating her, but who, when she said to him "Honour thy Master and do not sin with me", mastered his passion and let her go. The Holy One has made both righteous and wicked, and, as He is glorified in this world by the works of the righteous, so is He glorified by the wicked when they happen to do a good deed: "He hath made everything beautiful in his time" (Eccl. III, 11). But woe to the sinner who makes himself wicked and cleaves obstinately to his sin!'

R. Eleazar further said: 'King Solomon, when wisdom was given to him, saw all "in the time of his *hebel*", i.e. in the time when the moon (the Holy Spirit) ruled. He saw the Righteous (*Zaddik*), the Pillar of the world, "perishing in his righteousness" in the time of the exile, for when Israel is in exile He is with them, and the supernal blessings do not reach Him. Thus "there is a righteous that perisheth in his righteousness" (Eccl. VII, 15). On the other hand, he saw

"a wicked person that prolongeth his life in his evil" (*Ibid.*), namely Samael, who causes Edom (Rome) to continue in her prosperity through the help of his "Evil", his spouse, the loathsome Serpent. And the same applies to the prosperity of all the other kingdoms of this world; until the time when the Holy One, blessed be He, shall raise up from the dust "the booth of David that is fallen" (Amos IX, 11).'

AND THERE WENT A MAN OF THE HOUSE OF LEVI. R. Jose discoursed here on the verse: "My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices" (S.S. VI, 2). He said: 'The words "Into his garden" refer to the Community of Israel. She is a "bed of spices" filled with the savour of the world to come. In the hour when the Holy One descends into this Garden, the souls of all the righteous who are crowned there emit their perfume, as it says, "How much better is the smell of thy ointments than all spices" (S.S. IV, 10). These are they of whom R. Isaac has said: "All the souls of the righteous who have lived in this world, and all the souls who shall some day descend to dwell there, all these dwell in the earthly Garden (Paradise) in that shape which was or shall be their likeness on earth." This is a mystery which has been transmitted to the wise. The spirit which enters into the children of men, and which emanates from the Female (*Malkuth*) makes an impression after the fashion of a seal. That is to say, the form of the human body in this world is projected outwards, and takes the impress of the spirit from within. So when the spirit separates itself from the body it returns to the earthly Garden in the actual form and pattern of the body that was its garment during its sojourn in this world, and upon which it acted like a seal. Hence it says, "Set me as a seal" (*Ibid.* VIII, 6): as the seal presses from within and the mark of it appears outwards, so the spirit acts upon the body. But when it separates itself from the body and returns to the terrestrial Paradise, the æther there causes this impress in turn to project itself outwards, so that the spirit receives an outward shape in the likeness of the body in this world. The over-soul (*neshamah*), however, which issues from the Tree of Life (*Tifereth*), is fashioned there

above in such a manner that it may ascend into the "Bundle of Life", in order to delight in the beauty of the Lord; as it says, "To behold the beauty of the Lord and to visit his temple" (Ps. XXVII, 4).'

AND THERE WENT A MAN OF THE HOUSE OF LEVI. This refers to Gabriel, who is called "the Man" (Dan. IX, 21). "Of the house of Levi" is the Community of Israel, which proceeds from the "Left Side". "And took the daughter of Levi", namely the over-soul (*neshamah*); for we have been taught that in the hour when the body of a righteous one is born into the world, [11*b*] the Holy One summons Gabriel, who takes from Paradise the soul ordained for that saint and commands her to descend into the body of him who is to be born in this world; and he, Gabriel, is thus appointed as guardian to that soul. But, it may be said, do we not know that the angel appointed to guard the spirits is called "Laila" (night)? How, then, can you say it is Gabriel? The answer is that both names are correct; for Gabriel comes from the "Left Side", and anyone who comes from that side bears also the other name, which signifies "night".

According to another explanation, "a man" here is Amram, and "the daughter of Levi" is Jochebed. A heavenly voice bade him unite himself with her, as through the son which should be born of them the time of the redemption of Israel would be brought near. And the Holy One came to his aid, for, as we have been taught, the Shekinah reposed upon the nuptial bed and the will of the two in their union was one with the will of the Shekinah. Therefore the Shekinah ceased not to abide with the fruit of that union. It is written: "Sanctify yourselves and be holy" (Lev. XI, 44), which signifies that when a person so sanctifies himself here below the Holy One adds His sanctification from above. As the two strove to unite themselves also with the Shekinah, She on her side united Herself with them in their union. Said R. Isaac: 'Blessed are those righteous ones whose whole desire is ever to be united with the Holy One in completeness and perfection! Inasmuch as they cleave unto Him will He also cleave unto them for ever and ever. Woe unto the wicked,

whose desire and attachment is turned away from Him! Not only do they keep aloof from Him, dwelling in separation, but they even unite themselves to that "other side". Thus Amram, who was faithful to the Holy One, became the father of Moses—him whom the Holy One never deserted, and with whom the Shekinah was ever united, blessed be he!'

AND THE WOMAN CONCEIVED AND BARE A SON AND SHE SAW HIM THAT HE WAS GOOD. What mean the words "that he was good"? Said R. Hiya: 'She saw that even at his birth he was marked with the sign of the covenant, for the word "good" contains an allusion to the covenant, as it is written, "Say of the righteous one that he is good" (Isa. III, 10)' R. Jose said: 'She saw the light of the Shekinah playing round him: for when he was born this light filled the whole house, the word "good" here having the same reference as in the verse "and God saw the light that it was good" (Gen. I, 4).'

AND SHE HID HIM THREE MONTHS. What does this signify? R. Judah says: 'This is a hint that Moses was not destined to perceive the Supernal Light until three months (after the Exodus) had passed, as it says "in the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai" (Ex. XIX, 1). Only then was the Torah transmitted through him, and the Shekinah revealed, resting on him before the eyes of all, as it says, "and Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called him out of the mountain" (*Ibid.* V, 3).'

AND WHEN SHE COULD NO LONGER HIDE HIM. During all that time his communing with the Holy One, blessed be He, was not manifest; but afterwards, "Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice" (Ex. XIX, 19). SHE TOOK FOR HIM AN ARK OF BULRUSHES: thereby prefiguring the Ark that contains the "Tables of the Covenant": AND DAUBED IT WITH SLIME AND WITH PITCH, prefiguring again the Ark which was overlaid within and without. R. Judah said that this was symbolic of the Torah

in which the Holy One, blessed be He, laid down stringent rules[1] in the form of precepts, positive and negative. AND SHE PUT THE CHILD THEREIN. This prefigures Israel, of whom it is written: "When Israel was a child then I loved him" (Hos. XI, 1): AND LAID IT IN THE FLAGS (*souph*), alluding to the precepts of the Torah, which did not come into force until they entered the Land at the end (*soph*) of forty years. BY THE BRINK (*s'phath*—lip) of the river, alluding to the instruction issuing from the lips of the teachers of law and statute.

The following is an alternative explanation of these verses: AND TOOK TO WIFE A DAUGHTER OF LEVI. This signifies the place which is filled with the brightness of moonlight (*Malkuth*). [12a] AND SHE HID HIM THREE MONTHS. These are the three months in which the world is under the ægis of stern Justice, namely Tammuz, Ab, and Tebet. And what mean these words? They signify that before descending into this world Moses dwelt already in the upper regions, and therefore was united with the Shekinah from the moment of his birth. R. Simeon concluded from this that the spirits of the righteous exist in heaven before they come down into this world. AND WHEN SHE COULD NO LONGER HIDE HIM SHE TOOK FOR HIM AN ARK OF BULRUSHES. She guarded him with signs against the power of the fishes that swim in the ocean—that is, the evil spirits—"wherein are things creeping innumerable" (Ps. CIV, 25). She protected him from such harm by a precious covering composed of two colours, black and white (grace and might). She laid the child between these hues, in order that he might become familiar with them, and later ascend between them to receive the Torah.

AND THE DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH CAME DOWN TO BATHE IN THE RIVER. She was the symbol of the power emanating from the "left side", which betokens severity; she thus bathed in the "river" and not in the "sea". AND HER MAIDENS WALKED ALONG BY THE RIVERSIDE:

[1] A play on the word *homer*, which means both 'slime' and (as a legal term) 'stringency'.

signifying all the legions that proceed from that side. AND SHE OPENED IT AND SHE SAW IT (*vathir'ehu*), THE CHILD. Why say "she saw it, the child" instead of simply "she saw the child"? Said R. Simeon: 'There is not a word in the Torah that does not contain sublime and precious mystical teachings. In regard to this passage, we have learned that the impress of the King and the Matrona was discernible in the child, an impress symbolized by the letters *Vau* and *Hé*. She thus straightway "had compassion on him". So far, the whole passage has allusions to heavenly matters; from this point the text concerns earthly occurrences, with the exception of the verse following.

AND HIS SISTER STOOD AFAR OFF. Whose sister? The sister of Him Who calls the Community of Israel "My sister", in the verse "Open to me, my sister, my love!" (Cant. V, 2). "Afar off"—as it is written: "From far off hath the Lord appeared unto me" (Jer. XXXI, 2). From which it is evident that all the righteous are known by all in those higher regions before their souls descend into this world; how much more, then, Moses. We also learn from this that the souls of the righteous emanate from an upper region, as we have already stated. But there is also an esoteric lesson connected with it, namely, that the soul has a father and a mother, as the body has a father and a mother in this world. In fact, all things above and below proceed from Male and Female, as we have already derived from the words "Let the earth bring forth a living soul" (Gen. I, 24). "The earth" symbolizes the community of Israel; "a living soul"—the soul of the first, the supernal Man, as already explained.' Then came R. Abba to him, kissed him, and said: 'Verily, thou hast spoken well! It is so indeed. Blessed is Moses, the faithful Shepherd, more faithful than all the other prophets of the world.' There is still another interpretation of "and his sister stood afar off", namely, as symbolizing "Wisdom" —"say to wisdom, thou art my sister" (Prov. VII, 4). [12b]

Said R. Isaac: 'The attribute of Justice has never departed from the world, for whenever Israel sinned, stern Justice stood there as her accuser, and then "his sister (wisdom)

stood afar off", without interfering. "And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe in the river": i.e. as soon as Israel separates herself from the Torah, the attribute of Justice comes forth to "bathe" in the blood of Israel, because of the neglect of the Torah. "And her maidens walked along by the river's side": these are the nations who persecute Israel, because of her neglect of the Torah.' Said R. Judah: 'Man's fate depends in the last resort upon repentance and prayer, and especially prayer with tears; for there is no gate which tears cannot penetrate. It is written here: "And she opened it and saw the child", which, being interpreted, means that the Shekinah, who always hovers over Israel like a mother over her children, and pleads in her defence against her accuser, opened it "and saw the child, and behold the babe wept". The Shekinah saw the "child", the people of Israel, which is called "the child of delight" (Jer. XXXI, 20), in remorseful tears, pleading with the Holy One like a child with his father, and she "had compassion on him". She said: "This is one of the Hebrews' children", that is to say, of the Hebrews, who are gentle and tender-hearted, and not of the Gentiles, who are stiff-necked and stubborn of heart; they, the Hebrews, are tender-hearted and eager to return to their heavenly Master. "And she called the child's mother", who wept, as it is written: "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted" (Jer. XXXI, 14). The child wept, and the mother wept.' R. Judah continued: 'Concerning the future it says: "They will come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them." For the sake of the weeping of Rachel, the child's mother, will they come and be gathered in from captivity.' R. Isaac said: 'The redemption of Israel depends only on weeping: when the effect of the tears of Esau, which he shed before his father on account of the birthright (Gen. XXVII, 38) shall have been exhausted, redemption will begin for Israel.' Said R. Jose: 'Esau's weeping brought Israel into captivity, and when their force is exhausted, Israel, through their tears, shall be delivered from him.'

AND HE SAW AN EGYPTIAN SMITING A HEBREW . . . AND HE LOOKED HERE AND THERE (*koh wa-koh*). He looked for the fifty letters by which the Israelites proclaim the Divine Unity twice daily, but found no semblance of them expressed in the countenance of that man. Said R. Abba: 'He looked "here" to see whether there were any good works wrought by the man, and "there" to see whether a good son would issue from him. "And he saw that there was no man"; he saw through the holy spirit that no such good son would ever descend from him, for he was aware, as R. Abba has said, that there are many wicked parents who beget more good sons than righteous parents, and that a good son born of wicked parents is of special excellence, being pure out of impure, light out of darkness, wisdom out of folly. The word "saw" here indicates discernment through the holy spirit, and therefore he did not shrink from killing the Egyptian.

'Now the Holy One, blessed be He, so ordered matters that Moses might come to the same well to which Jacob came. It says here: "And he sat down by (*'al*, lit. upon) a well" (*Ibid.* v, 15), and of Jacob it says, "And he looked, and behold, a well" (Gen. XIX, 2). This shows that although they belonged to the same degree (of sanctity), Moses in this ascended higher than Jacob.' As R. Jose and R. Isaac were once walking together, the former said: 'Was the well which both Jacob and Moses saw the same one which was digged by Abraham and Isaac?' Said R. Isaac: 'No! This well was created when the world was created, and its mouth was formed on the eve of the Sabbath of Creation, in the twilight."[1] That was the well which Jacob and Moses saw.' [13a]

NOW THE PRIEST OF MIDIAN HAD SEVEN DAUGHTERS. Said R. Judah: 'If the well from which they drew the water was Jacob's well, how were Jethro's daughters able to draw water from it without difficulty? Was there not "upon the well's mouth a great stone" which had to be "rolled away" by the shepherds (Gen. XXIX, 2–3)?' Said R. Hiya: 'Jacob removed that stone from the well and did not put it back.

[1] Cf. Pirke Aboth, v, 9.

From that time the water gushed forth, and there was no stone on the well, and thus Jethro's daughters were able to draw from it.'

R. Eleazar and R. Abba were once walking from Tiberias to Sipphoris. On the way a Jew joined them. Said R. Eleazar: 'Let each one of us expound some saying of the Torah!' He himself started by quoting the sentence: "Then said he unto me, prophesy unto the spirit, prophesy, son of man, and say to the spirit" (Ezek. XXXVII, 9). 'It may be asked, how could Ezekiel prophesy concerning the spirit, seeing that it is written: "No man hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit" (Eccl. VIII, 8)? Verily, man has no power over the spirit, but the Holy One has power over all things, and it was by His command that Ezekiel was prophesying. Besides, the spirit was embodied in material form in this world, and therefore he prophesied concerning it: "Come from the *four winds, O spirit!*"; *namely from the region* where it resides in the four foundations of the world.'

On hearing this the Jew jumped up. 'What is the matter?' asked R. Eleazar. The Jew replied: 'I see something.' 'And what is it?' He answered: 'If the spirit of man is endowed in Paradise with the form of the body which it is to assume in this world, should it not have been said: "Come from Paradise, O spirit!" and not "from the four winds"?' R. Eleazar replied: 'Before descending into this world the spirit ascends from the earthly Paradise to the Throne which stands on four pillars. There it draws its being from that Throne of the King, and only then does it descend to this world. As the body is collected from the four regions of the world, so is the spirit of man taken from the four pillars upon which the Throne is established.' 'The reason why I ran in front of you,' said the man, 'was because I beheld something from that side. One day I was walking in the desert and I beheld a tree, beautiful to look upon, and beneath it a cavern. I approached it and found that from the cavern issued a profusion of sweet odours. I plucked up courage and entered the cavern. I descended a number of steps which brought me to a place where there were many trees, and savours of overpowering sweetness. There I saw a man who

held a sceptre in his hand, standing at a place where the trees parted. When he saw me he was astonished and came up to me. "Who art thou, and what doest thou here?" he demanded. I was frightened exceedingly and said: "Sir, I am one of the Fellowship. I noticed this place in the desert, and so I entered." Said he: "As thou art one of the Fellowship, take this bundle of writings and give it to the members of the Fellowship, to those who know the mystery of the spirits of the righteous ones." He then struck [136b] me with the sceptre, and I fell asleep. In my sleep I saw crowds upon crowds arriving at that place, and the man touched them with the sceptre saying: "Take the path of the trees!" After going a little way they flew in the air and I did not know to where. I also heard voices of great multitudes and knew not who they were. When I awoke I saw nothing, and I was in fear and trembling. Then I beheld the man again. He asked me: "Hast thou seen anything?" I told him what I had seen in my sleep. Said he: "These were the spirits of the righteous who go by that way in order to reach Paradise, and what thou hast heard are the voices of those who stand in the Garden in the likeness they are to wear in this world, expressing their great joy at the arrival of the spirits of the righteous who enter there. As the body is formed in this world from the combination of the four elements, so is the spirit formed in the Garden from the combination of the four winds that are in the Garden, and the spirit is enveloped there in the impress of the body's shape, and if it were not for the four winds, which are the airs of the Garden, the spirit would not have been clothed at all. These four winds are bound up with one another, and the spirit is shaped from them, as the body is shaped from the four elements. Therefore it says: 'Come from the four winds, O spirit!', namely from the four winds of Paradise from which thou art shaped. And now take this bundle of writings, and go thy way, and give it to the Fellowship."' The Jew here finished, and R. Eleazar and his companions drew near and kissed him on his head. Said R. Eleazar: 'Blessed be the Merciful One Who sent thee here! Verily this is the true explanation of the subject, and God put that verse into my mouth.' Then the Jew gave them

the bundle of writings. As soon as R. Eleazar took it and opened it, a fiery vapour burst forth and enveloped him. He saw some things in it, and then the writing flew away from his hand. Then R. Eleazar wept, and said: 'Who can abide in the storehouse of the King? "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" (Ps. xv, 2). Blessed be the way and the hour in which this happened to me!' This incident made R. Eleazar glad for many days, but he said nothing to his colleagues. As they were proceeding, they passed a well from which they drank. Said R. Eleazar: 'Blessed are the righteous! Jacob ran away from his brother, and chanced to find a well; as soon as it saw him, the waters recognized their master and ascended to meet him, and there he found his spouse. Moses felt assured when he saw that the water came up to him that there he would meet his future wife. Furthermore, the holy spirit never left him, and he knew by inspiration that Zipporah would be his wife. He thought: "To be sure, Jacob came to this same place and the waters came up towards him, and then a man came up and took him into his house and supplied him with all his needs: the same will happen to me".' Said the man who accompanied them: 'We have been taught that Jethro had been a heathen priest, and as soon as he saw that there was no truth in paganism he renounced it and ceased to worship the idols, and then his people excommunicated him, and when they saw his daughters they drove them away, for previously the shepherds used to pasture Jethro's flocks. When Moses saw through the holy spirit that the shepherds acted as they did on account of their idolatrous religion, he straightway stood up and helped the daughters and watered their flocks, acting wholly from zeal for God in all things.' Said to him R. Eleazar: 'Thou hast been so long with us, and yet we know not [140a] thy name!' He replied: 'My name is Yoezer ben Jacob.' The colleagues came and kissed him. They said: 'Thou wert so long with us, and we knew thee not!' They walked together the whole day, and then accompanied him three miles on his way.

AND THEY SAID, AN EGYPTIAN DELIVERED US FROM

THE HAND OF THE SHEPHERDS. Said R. Hiya: 'The companions have affirmed that (in using the word "Egyptian") they spoke in a flash of inspiration, saying words of whose true import they themselves were not aware. They were indeed like a man dwelling in the desert who seldom tasted meat, but one day, when a bear pursuing a lamb passed his dwelling, he saved the lamb from the bear in order afterwards to slay it himself for food, so that it was the bear which was the means of supplying the man with meat. Even so it was due to the Egyptian whom Moses killed that Jethro's daughters were saved.'

The following is an alternative explanation of Ex. I, 11: AND THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. R. Judah opened with the words: "I am black but comely" (S.S. I, 5). He said that they refer to the community of Israel, who is "black" because of her captivity, and "comely" because of the Torah and good works, for which she will be worthy to inherit the Jerusalem that is above. Although she is "as the tents of Kedar", i.e. "black" (*kedar*), she is "like the curtains of Solomon", i.e. she belongs to the King of perfect peace (*shalom*).

R. Hiya the Great once visited the masters of the (esoteric) lore to learn from them. He came to the house of R. Simeon ben Yohai and found it shut off by a curtain. R. Hiya felt bashful and said: 'I shall stand here and listen to what he says.' And he heard R. Simeon say: '*Flee away, my beloved, like the gazelle, or like a young hart on mountains of spices* (S.S. VIII, 14). This signifies the longing of Israel for the Holy One, blessed be He: she implores Him not to depart from her to a distance, but to be even as a gazelle and a young hart. These animals, unlike all others, do when running go but a little way, and then look back, turning their faces toward the place from which they came, then running on, do again turn round and look back. So the Israelites say to the Holy One, blessed be He: "If our sins have caused Thee to flee from us, may it be Thy pleasure to run like a gazelle or like a young hart, and look back on us!" And, indeed, is it not written: "And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I

abhor them, to destroy them utterly" (Lev. XXVI, 44)? Furthermore, a gazelle sleeps with one eye closed and the other one open, and so Israel says to the Holy One, blessed be He, "Be unto me like a gazelle also in this"! Yea, verily, "He who keepeth Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth" (Ps. CXXI, 4).'

Hearing all this, R. Ḥiya said: 'Behold, supernal beings are present in this house, and do I stay outside? Woe is me.' And he commenced to weep. But R. Simeon, hearing him from within, said: 'Verily, the Shekinah is outside. Who will go out to bring Her in?' Said R. Eleazar his son: "Though I burn, I shall not burn any more than the phœnix, for the Shekinah is there outside. Let her enter here, in order that the fire may be perfect.' Then he heard a voice: 'Not yet have the pillars been set up nor have the gates been fixed, and he is of those who are too young for the spices of Eden which are here.' So R. Eleazar did not go out. R. Ḥiya, still sitting without, sighed and recited: ' "Turn, my beloved, and be thou like unto a gazelle, or like unto a young hart upon mountains of disruption" (S.S. II, 17).' Then the dividing curtain opened, but R. Ḥiya did not enter. R. Simeon lifted up his eyes and said: 'He who is without has, by a clear sign, been permitted to enter, and do we remain here?' He stood up and lo, as he rose a fire began to move from the place where he stood to the place where R. Ḥiya was. Said R. Simeon: 'A spark of radiant light is without and I am here within.' R. Ḥiya could not open his mouth. When he entered, he dropped his eyes and looked not up. Said R. Simeon to R. Eleazar his son: 'Arise and pass thy hand over his mouth, for he is unaccustomed to these surroundings.' R. Eleazar arose and did so. Then R. Ḥiya opened his mouth and said: 'My eyes now see something they have not seen before. I have reached a height that I did not dream of. It is good to die in the fire kindled by the good gold, at the place where sparks fly on every side, each one ascending to three hundred [146] and seventy-five rows of angels, and each of which spreads itself to thousands and myriads, until they reach the Ancient of Days, who sits upon the Throne. The Throne trembles, and the trembling thereof penetrates through a

hundred and sixty worlds until it reaches a place which is called "the delight of the righteous", and it is heard throughout all the firmaments. Then all they that are above and all that are below are greatly amazed, and cry as with one voice: "This is R. Simeon ben Yoḥai, the world-shaker; who can stand before him? When he opens his lips to expound the Torah, all the thrones, all the firmaments, all the angelic hosts, all who praise their Lord, do listen to his voice. No mouth is opened: all are silent, and not a sound is heard until his words break through all the firmaments above and below. But when he ends, then the song and the rejoicing of them who praise their Lord is such as was never before heard; it echoes through all the firmaments of Heaven—and all this on account of R. Simeon and his wisdom! They bow before their Master, the perfume of the spices from Eden ascends in sweetness to the Throne of the Ancient of Days—and all this on account of R. Simeon and his wisdom!".'

R. Simeon here discoursed as follows: 'In his going down into Egypt Jacob was accompanied by six angelic grades, each consisting of ten thousand myriads. Correspondingly Israel was made up of six grades, in correspondence to which again there are six steps to the supernal celestial Throne, and corresponding to them six steps to the lower celestial Throne.[1] Observe that each grade was an epitome of ten grades, so that altogether there were sixty, indentical with the "threescore mighty men" that are round about the Shekinah. And these sixty, again, are the sixty myriads that accompanied Israel in their departure from exile and accompanied Jacob into exile.' R. Ḥiya asked him: 'But are there not seven grades, each an epitome of the ten grades, thus amounting to seventy?' R. Simeon said in reply: "That number has no bearing on this matter, as we learn from the description of the candlestick, of which it says: "And there shall be six branches going out of the sides thereof: three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof . . . And thou shalt make the lamps thereof seven" (Ex. XXV, 32). The central branch is not counted with the rest, as it

[1] *Malkuth.*

says, "and they shall light the lamps thereof over against it" (*Ibid.*).'

As they sat thus, R. Eleazar asked his father, R. Simeon: 'For what purpose, and to what end, did the Holy One, blessed be He, allow Israel to go down to Egypt to be in exile there?' His father replied: 'Dost thou ask one question or two?' 'Two,' said R. Eleazar, 'why to Egypt, and why in exile?' Said R. Simeon: 'Stand up and take courage! In thy name shall this word be established above. Speak, my son, speak!' Then R. Eleazar opened his mouth and said:' "Threescore queens are they, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number" (S.S. VI, 8). The "threescore queens" are allegorical of the celestial heroic angels that are of the host of Geburah, and that attach themselves to the "shells" (*k'lifoth*, i.e. baser elements) of the holy congregation of Israel. The "fourscore concubines" signify the lower "*klifoth*" that have dominion in this world, and whose power is to the higher powers as one to a hundred. The "virgins without number" are those angelic hosts of whom it is said, "Is there a number to his bands?" (Job. XXV, 3). And yet "My dove, my undefiled, is but one, she is the only one of her mother" (S.S. VI, 9), the Holy Shekinah, who proceeds from the twelve flashes of the radiance which illumines all things, and is called "Mother". And the Holy One, blessed be He, dealt according to this principle with the earth: He scattered the nations abroad in separation and appointed supernal chiefs over them, as it is written, "which the Lord hath imparted to all the nations under heaven" (Deut. VI, 19). But He took unto Himself the congregation of Israel to be His own portion and His own choice, as it is written, "For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (*Ibid.* XXXII, 9). Thus it is clear that Israel is directly under God and none other; and He says of her: "My dove, my undefiled, is but one, she is the only one of her Mother." She is the only one of her Mother Shekinah who dwells in her midst. "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all" (Prov. XXXI, 29).'

There is a further esoteric meaning in this verse. We are told: "With ten Sayings the world was created" (Pirke Ab. V, 1). Yet, on examination they prove to be only three, viz. Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge. The world was created only for the sake of Israel. When the Holy One, blessed be He, desired to endow the earth with permanence, He formed Abraham in the mystery of Wisdom, Isaac in the mystery of Understanding, and Jacob in the mystery of Perception, that is to say, of Knowledge. Therefore it is said: "With wisdom is the house built, and by understanding it is established, and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled . . ." (Prov. XXIV, 4–5). At that hour the whole world came into perfection; and when the twelve Tribes were born to Jacob, [15a] all things came to completion according to the supernal pattern ordained from the beginning. When the Holy One beheld the exceeding joy of this lower world at being completed after the fashion of the world above, He said: "Should they (the Israelites) mingle with the other nations, a blemish would be caused in all the worlds". What, then, did He do? He caused them to wander over the face of the earth and from one nation to another until, in Egypt, they fell among those of a stubborn race, who, deeming them but slaves, despised their customs and abhorred their ways, and would not mingle with them or have a part in them. Both male and female among the Egyptians loathed them, and thus the whole Divine purpose could come into completion within the holy seed itself, whilst at the same time the guilt of the other nations became complete, as it is written: "In the fourth generation they (the children of Abraham) shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. XV, 16). And when the Israelites came out of the bondage of Egypt, they came out as beings pure and holy, as it says: "The tribes of the Lord, the testimony of Israel" (Ps. CXXII, 4).'

Then R. Simeon approached his son, and kissing him he said: 'Remain, my son, standing at thy place, for the hour favours thee.' Then R. Simeon sat and listened while R. Eleazar, his son, stood and expounded mysteries of wisdom. And as he spoke his countenance was lit as by the radiance of the sun, and his words ascended to the starry heights and flitted across the firmament. They thus continued for a space

of two days, neither eating nor drinking, and noticing neither day nor night. When they came forth they found that they had not tasted anything for two days. Said R. Simeon: 'We are told that Moses "was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water" (Ex. XXIV, 28). If we, who but for a brief space were caught up into that rapture of Divine contemplation, forgot to eat and drink, how much more so Moses!'

When R. Ḥiya appeared before R. Judah the Saint and related this occurrence to him, R. Simeon ben Gamliel, R. Judah's father, said: 'R. Simeon ben Yoḥai is indeed a lion and his son likewise. He is different from all others of his kind. Of him it is written: "The lion hath roared, who will not fear?" (Amos III, 8). And if even the upper worlds do tremble before him, how much more then we? A man who has no need of fasting to proclaim his desires to the Almighty, and to have them fulfilled, since he decides and the Holy One, blessed be He, confirms his decision; or the Holy One deciding, he revokes the decision and it is annulled! As it is said: "There shall be one that ruleth over man, a righteous one ruling in the fear of the Lord" (2 Sam. XXIII, 3). The Holy One rules over man, but who rules over the Holy One? Surely, the Righteous! For it may even be from time to time that the Holy One proposes and the righteous disposes!'

R. Judah said: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, delights more in the prayer of the righteous than in any other thing soever; yet, though it please Him better than all else, He does not always grant their requests, nor do all that they ask. He sometimes refuses to fulfil their wish.'

It is recounted by the disciples that on one occasion when there was a shortage of rain, R. Eleazar decreed that the congregation should fast forty days. But no rain fell. Then R. Akiba prayed, and as he spake the words "Thou causest the wind to blow" so the wind blew, and when he said "and the rain to fall", lo, the rain fell. R. Eleazar was much chagrined at this. R. Akiba read his feelings in his looks, so he stood up and said to the congregation: 'I will tell you a parable. R. Eleazar is like unto one who is the king's own friend and dear companion: when he goes to the palace to

entreat some favour, it is not granted at once, since the king so delights in his friend's presence that he keeps him by him as long as possible. I, on the other hand, am like the king's servant, whose requests are quickly granted, the king only desiring to get rid of him at once and be no more troubled; therefore he says: "Give the man what he wants at once, so that he should not have to enter my chamber!".' On hearing this, R. Eleazar was comforted. He said to him: 'Akiba, let me tell you what was shown to me in a dream in regard to the words, "Pray not for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me" (Jer. VII, 16). Twelve rows of pure balsam entered with him who wears breastplate and Ephod (i.e. the heavenly High Priest, the Intercessor, probably Metatron) when he prayed to the Holy One to have mercy upon the world, and yet he still is unanswered.' If so, why was R. Eleazar vexed? Because people did not know this.

Said R. Eleazar: 'Eighteen gardens of balsam are entered daily by the souls of the righteous, from which emanate forty-nine aromas, [15b] reaching to the place called Eden—in correspondence with the forty-nine ways of interpreting the Torah,[1] the forty-nine letters in the names of the twelve tribes, the forty-nine days' interval between the Exodus and the giving of the Law. Forty-nine holy days stand there, and each day waits for the instructions of the flashing stone set in the breastplate, and he who is adorned with the breastplate sits on a holy glorious throne. They look at the breastplate, and take the order from it either to enter or to depart. They lift up their eyes and behold a shining plate flashing towards six hundred and twenty sides on which the supernal holy Name is engraved.' Said R. Akiba to him: 'What is the meaning of the words, "I went down into the garden of nuts (Heb. *nut*)" (S.S. VI, 11)?' R. Eleazar replied: 'This garden is the one that goes out of Eden, namely the Shekinah; the "nut" is the supernal holy Chariot, namely the four heads into which the river parted (Gen. II, 10), like the walnut, which has four sections inside. "I went down" is used in the same sense as in the expression, "So-and-so went

[1] Cf. Midrash Rabbah, Cant. 13a.

down to the Chariot" (i.e. penetrated to its inner meaning).' Said R. Akiba: 'In that case it ought to have said: "I went down into the nut"; why does it say, "into the garden of nuts" ?' Said R. Eleazar: 'As it is the virtue of a nut to be closed in from all sides, so is the Chariot which goes out of the Garden (Paradise) hidden on all sides; as the four sections of the walnut are united at one side and separated at the other, so are all the parts of the Celestial Chariot united in perfect union, and yet each part fulfils a special purpose; one "compasses the whole land of Havilah", and the other "compasses the whole land of Cush", etc.' Said R. Akiba: 'What is the symbolism of the moisture in the shell of the walnut ?' R. Eleazar replied: 'Although the Scripture does not reveal it in this connection, it does in another connection. Almonds are sweet and also bitter, symbolizing condemnation and acquittal, although every instance in the Bible refers to condemnation only (cf. Jer. I, 11-12).' Said R. Akiba: 'Indeed, everything that the Holy One has made can teach us deep lessons, as it says, "The Lord hath made all things (to teach us wisdom) concerning himself" (Prov. XVI, 4).' R. Eleazar remarked: 'Rather quote the following verse: "And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." The "very" suggests that we should learn the higher supernal wisdom from all that He made.' R. Judah said: 'That which God has made on earth corresponds to that which He made in heaven, and all things below are symbols of that which is above.' When R. Abba once saw a bird flying away from its nest in a tree, he wept, saying: 'If men only knew what this means, they would rend their garments for the knowledge which has perished from them. For as R. Jose says, "The trees which give mystic indications, like the carob and date tree, can all be grafted on one another. All that bear fruit have one secret nature, save the apple; all that do not bear fruit, save the willows of the brook, suck from one source; and all lowly shrubs, save the hyssop, are from one mother. Every kind of herb has its counterpart above. Therefore it is prohibited to "sow a field with mingled seed" (Lev. XIX, 19). [16a] Now if it is true that all things have their counterparts in heaven, and God gives each one

its name, how much more so is it true of the sons of Jacob, the holy Tribes, the pillars of the world ! And this is the significance of the words "and these are the names", etc.'

AND THESE ARE THE NAMES. Each time that R. Eleazar ben Arach came to this verse he wept. He said that when Israel went into exile all the souls of their progenitors gathered in the cave of Machpelah and cried: "Old man, the afflictions of thy children are terrible; they have to do the work of slaves and a heathen nation makes their lives unbearable." Immediately the spirit of Jacob was awakened. He asked permission to go to Egypt, and he went. Then the Holy One summoned all His celestial hosts and their leaders and they all accompanied Jacob and his sons. The tribes went down to Egypt with their father when they were alive and again when they were dead. Said R. Abba: 'Then the words were fulfilled: "As a father pitieth his children" (Ps. CIII, 13).'

R. Judah bar Shalom was once walking together with R. Abba. They arrived at a place where they decided to spend the night. After taking a meal they lay down to sleep, putting their heads on some raised ground under which was a grave. Before falling asleep they heard a voice from the grave, crying: 'Twelve years [16b] have I been sleeping here, and only now do I wake, for I now see the image of my son.' R. Judah asked him who he was, and he said: 'I am a Jew, and lie under a ban, not being able to enter the higher regions because of the sorrows of my son, who was stolen by a heathen when he was very young, and is sorely maltreated.' Said R. Judah to him: 'Do the dead know of the sufferings of the living ?' He replied: 'If it were not for us, the dead, who intercede before the angel of the grave for the living, they would not remain alive for half a day. I have awakened now, for I was told that my son would come here, but I know not whether alive or dead.' Then R. Judah asked him: 'What do ye do in that other world ?' The grave shook, and a voice was heard, saying: 'Go away ! For at this moment my son is being beaten.' They ran from there for about half a mile and sat down until the morning. When they rose to go they saw a man running with blood streaming from his

shoulders. They stopped him, and he told them what had happened to him. They asked him his name and he said: 'Laḥma the son of Levi.' 'Why,' said they, 'that is the son of the dead man!' They were afraid to converse with him, neither did they return to the place of the grave. Said R. Abba: 'That the prayers of the dead protect the living we learn from Caleb, who went to Hebron to beg for the intercession of the patriarchs (*v.* Num. XIII, 22).' R. Judah said: 'The Holy One gave two promises (lit. vows) to Jacob: one, that He Himself would go down and stay with him in exile; and the second, that He would let him come out of his grave to behold the joy of the holy host of celestial beings who would dwell with his children in their captivity; as it is written: "I will go down with thee into Egypt and I will surely bring thee up again" (Gen. XLVI, 4); "I will cause you to come up out of your graves" (Ezek. XXXVII, 12); "Whither the tribes go up" (Ps. CXXII, 5).'

NOW THERE AROSE A NEW KING OVER EGYPT. R. Simeon said: 'As soon as Joseph died, the celestial representative of Egypt was given domination over all the other nations, as it says: "And Joseph died . . . and a new king arose", like one who rose to power from a lowly position. R. Tanḥum said: 'Every nation has its own representative above, and when God elevates one He degrades another, and when He gives power to this one it is only on account of Israel, as it says: "Her adversaries have become chiefs" (Lam. I, 5).' R. Isaac said: 'Israel singly is equivalent to all the other nations together; as seventy is the number of the nations, so seventy was the number of the children of Israel when they came into Egypt, and whoever rules over Israel rules over the whole world.' R. Huna said: 'Why is Israel subjected to all nations? In order that the world may be preserved through them, since they are on a par with the whole world. As God is One, so is Israel one, as it says: "And who is like thy people, *one* people on earth?" (2 Sam. VII, 23). And as His name is one and yet has seventy ramifications, so is Israel one, and yet divided into seventy.' R. Judah applied the words: "For three things the earth is

disquieted . . . for a servant when he reigneth . . . and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress" (Prov. XXX, 21–22), [170a] to Egypt and Ishmael (Islam). There is no nation so despised of the Holy One as Egypt, and yet he gave her dominion over Israel; while the "handmaid" is Hagar, who bare Ishmael, who tormented Israel so cruelly in the past, and still rules over her and persecutes her for her faith. In truth, the exile under Ishmael is the hardest of all exiles. Once, when going up to Jerusalem, R. Joshua saw an Arab and his son meet a Jew. The Arab said to his son: "See! There is a Jew whom God has rejected. Go and insult him. Spit in his face seven times, for he is of the seed of the exalted ones, and I know that the seventy nations shall be ruled by them". The boy went and took hold of the Jew's beard, whereupon R. Joshua said: "Mighty ones, mighty ones, I call upon the supernal ones to come down below!" And even before he had finished, the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the Arabs.'

R. Isaac interpreted the verse "Until the day break and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense" (S.S. IV, 6) in connection with Israel's exile. 'She will be subjected by the nations until the "day" of the Gentiles, which is a thousand years, comes to an end—the "one day known to the Lord" (Zech. XIV, 7)—and "the shadows flee away", namely those who ruled over them. "I will get me", says the Holy One, "to the mountain of Moriah—Jerusalem—to drive away the heathen nations from there; and to the Sanctuary on Mount Zion, the joy of the whole earth." He will "take hold of the ends of the earth that the wicked might be shaken out of it" (Job XXXVIII, 13), as one shakes out the dust from a garment.' R. Jose said: 'Even before the day of the Gentiles be completed the Holy One will reveal Himself in the Jerusalem below to purify her from the abominations of the heathen, for R. Ḥiya has said that the domination of the Gentiles over Israel cannot last a day longer than a thousand years, which is the Holy One's One Day. Should it last longer, it will not be according to the King's will, but because Israel will not turn to Him in repentance, as it is written: "When

thou shalt return unto the Lord . . . then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity" (Deut. XXX, 1-4).'

AND HE SAID UNTO HIS PEOPLE. Said R. Simeon: 'This refers to Egypt's principality in heaven. Note that this passage mostly speaks of "the king of Egypt", which refers to the celestial chieftain of Egypt; but where it says, "Pharaoh king of Egypt" the actual king is meant. "He said" means he put the idea into their minds that the representative in heaven of the children of Israel was mightier than theirs.' R. Isaac said: 'All the nations of the world derive their power from their celestial prototypes, but Israel only from God, therefore she is called "the people of the Lord".' R. Judah said: 'The Egyptians are here called "his (their representative's) people", and God says of Israel: "I have seen the affliction of my people" (Ex. III, 7): it is to be taken in the strictly literal sense, as it is written, "For all peoples walk every one in the name of its god, but we walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever" (Micah IV, 5).' R. Abba said: 'Instead of the peculiar expression "the people of the children of Israel", we should expect either "the people of Israel", or simply "the children of Israel". "Children of Israel", therefore, must refer to the angels, the children of the supernal Israel, and the Israelites were called by Pharaoh their people and not the people of the Lord.' [176b] R. Johanan, being in the presence of R. Isaac, put to him the question: 'What made Balak say, "Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt" (Num. XXII, 5) instead of saying, "Behold, a people, to wit, the children of Israel"?' R. Isaac replied: 'Balak was a great sorcerer, and it is the way of sorcerers to avoid any doubtful statement. Thus, in mentioning a man they will never mention the name of his father, but that of his mother, for the reason that a man's maternal descent is beyond any doubt. They adopt this course because the demons scrutinize every word uttered to them, so that if it be a falsehood they communicate to the utterer lying information, but if it be truthful they communicate truthful information, at least about things that are to happen shortly. All the more is this the case when

they are invoked to perform some action.' R. Aha said: 'Balak wished to show his contempt of Israel by his expression: "Behold, a people went forth from Egypt", as much as to say, "a people, whose origin we know not".'

R. Johanan said: 'Why are the nations of the celestial chieftains kept in safety and the people of the Holy One not?' R. Isaac replied: 'A poor man needs to take care of his goods, but not a rich one. Further, Israel belongs to the King who loves truth and justice, and therefore He punishes principally and first of all the members of His own family, in order that they may guard themselves from sin more than the outsiders, as it says: "Only you have I known from among all the families of the earth, therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities" (Amos III, 2).'

R. Jose one day went for a walk with R. Aha bar Jacob. Neither spoke, but whereas R. Aha meditated on spiritual matters, R. Jose's mind was occupied with worldly things. As they were thus proceeding, R. Jose suddenly beheld a wild beast running after him. He said to R. Aha: 'Dost thou not see the beast running after me?' 'No,' replied R. Aha, 'I see nothing.' R. Jose ran, pursued by the beast. He fell, and blood gushed from his nose. Then he heard a voice say: "You only have I known, etc." Musing on these words, he said: 'If I have been punished because my mind was but for one moment separated from the Torah, what must await him who is for ever apart from her! It is written, "Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions" (Deut. VIII, 15). Why fiery serpents? To punish Israel should she separate herself from the Tree of Life, which is the Torah. God punishes the students of the Torah in order that they may not be separated from the Tree of Life even for a single moment.'

AND HE SAID UNTO HIS PEOPLE. R. Isaac once drew near to the foot of a mountain, and there beheld a man sleeping under a tree. He sat down. Suddenly and without warning the earth began to quake violently and became full of fissures. The tree was uprooted and fell to the ground; and the man beneath it woke, and cried with a loud voice:

'O Jew, O Jew, weep and lament with mourning and sounds of sorrow! For even at this very moment a great supernal prince of the Gentiles is being appointed in Heaven, who will cause terrible misfortune to Israel. This quaking of the earth is meant as a portent and a warning to you.' At this R. Isaac fell a-trembling, and said: 'Verily, it is written, "For three things the earth is disquieted . . . for a servant when he reigneth, etc.", that is, when the supramundane principality, who was previously under another ruler, reigns, especially over Israel.' R. Hama bar Gurya said: 'When God allows Israel to fall under the oppression of the Gentiles He (God) weeps, as it is written, "My soul weeps in secret places" (Jer. XIII, 17).'

R. Judah once visited R. Eleazar. He found him sitting deep in thought, his hand pressed to his mouth in sadness. 'What are you thinking about?' he asked. [182a] R. Eleazar replied: 'It says "In the light of the king's countenance there is life" (Prov. XVI, 15), but if our Master is cast down in spirit, and even sighing and weeping, what can his ministers do but follow His example? Therefore it is written, "Behold, their valiant ones (angels) cry without, the angels of peace weep bitterly" (Is. XXXIII, 7). Why do they cry? Because their Lord is within and they are without; because their Lord is in the inner chambers and they are in the outer courts. Why are they called "angels of peace"? Are there angels who are not of peace? Yea, verily! For there are emissaries both of stern judgement and of less stern judgement, and there are those whose attribute is justice mingled with mercy, and some who represent mercy only. It is these last who are called "Angels of peace". Of the lowest degree of heavenly beings it is written, "I clothe the heavens with blackness and I make sackcloth their covering" (Is. L, 3). But unto what end do the principalities of the Gentile nations cause God's children to suffer, seeing that it makes their Master grieve? They only carry out their office and they needs must do the will of their Lord.'

Said R. Dostai: 'When the children of the Holy One are delivered up to the rulers of the Gentiles, twelve celestial tribunals meet together and precipitate themselves into the great abyss, and all the ministering angels with all servitors cry in agony. Two tears fall then into the abyss. The higher angelic beings roll down below, and the lower are brought still lower to the measure of two hundred and forty degrees, for "The lion hath roared, who will not fear?" (Amos III, 8).' We have learned that at the time the Holy One, blessed be He, had given over Israel into the hand of the chieftain of Egypt, He decreed that seven hardships should be laid on them by the Egyptians. These are enumerated in the verse saying: "And they made their lives bitter with hard service, etc." Correspondingly, He bestowed on them seven favours, as enumerated in the verse: "And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed mighty, very mighty, exceedingly so, and the land was filled with them."

COME, LET US DEAL WISELY WITH THEM LEST THEY MULTIPLY (Ex. I, 10). R. Judah said in the name of R. Isaac: 'Why did the Egyptians so desire to prevent Israel from multiplying, and what motive prompted their supernal representative to put such a desire into their hearts? Because he knew and made known to them that a son would be born to the Israelites through whom judgement should be brought upon the gods of Egypt; for, according to R. Johanan, when Moses said that God "will exercise judgement against all the gods of Egypt" (Ex. XII, 12), Duma, the celestial Prince of Egypt, ran away four hundred parasangs, and the Holy One said to him: "It is My decree!" In that hour his power and his dominion was taken from him, and he was banished, instead, to the lower regions and appointed over the realms of Gehenna, as judge of the souls of the wicked.' R. Judah said that he was appointed over the dead. R. Hanina said: 'It is written: "Upon their gods also the Lord executed judgements" (Num. XXXIII, 4). Can we speak of judgements being executed on gods made of silver or gold, of wood or stone?' R. Jose replied: 'Those made of silver and gold were melted of themselves, and the wooden rotted of themselves.' R. Eleazar said: 'The god of Egypt was the sheep, and so the Holy One, blessed be He, commanded to burn it in fire, so

that its evil smell should go forth ; and that it should be burnt with "its head with its legs and the inwards thereof" (Ex. XII, 9). And in addition, its bones were thrown into the market-place, a thing which distressed the Egyptians beyond all else. This was the "judgement" implied in the verse cited.' R. Judah said: ' "Against their gods" refers in a literal sense to their Chieftains, in fulfilment of the prophecy: "The Lord will punish the host of the high heaven on high" (Is. XXIV, 21). The wise men among the Egyptians knew all this, and all the more so their Chieftain. Hence they said: "Come, let us deal wisely with them".' Said R. Johanan: 'They had many idols, but their chief god was the Nile, [18b] and the Lord executed judgements on them all.' Said R. Abba: 'The exposition of R. Johanan is the correct and self-evident one. For we know that first the gods of a nation are punished and then the nation itself. So here, first the Nile and wood and stones were smitten, as Scripture says: "and there shall be blood throughout the land of Egypt, both in wood and stone" (Ex. XII, 19), the wood and stone being the very gods which the Egyptians worshipped.' R. Isaac remarked: 'But it is written, "the host of the high heaven on high", whereas the Nile was not on high.' Said R. Johanan: 'The greater part of its waters resemble their prototype on high.' R. Isaac said: 'First their Chieftain was smitten and then the rest of their gods.' R. Simeon, the son of R. Jose, said: 'The punishment of the Egyptian nation itself was accomplished at the sea, in regard to which it is written: "There remained not so much as one of them" (*Ibid.* XIV, 28), and before that, judgements were executed against their gods. Hence the words of Pharaoh, saying: "Come, let us deal wisely with them lest they multiply, and it come to pass that, when befalleth us any war, etc." There was here a premonition of what actually came to pass—"they also join themselves unto our enemies"—a premonition of the heavenly hosts that stood by the Israelites—"and fight against us" —a prediction of what Moses declared, saying: "The Lord will fight for you" (*Ibid.* XIV, 14)—"and get them up out of the land"—as in fact we read: "for the children of Israel went out with a high hand" (*Ibid.* XIV, 8).'

AND THERE WENT A MAN OF THE HOUSE OF LEVI AND TOOK TO WIFE A DAUGHTER OF LEVI. R. Eleazar discoursed on the verse, "The Song of Songs of Solomon" (S.S. I, 1). He said: 'We have learnt that when the Holy One, blessed be He, was about to create the world, He was pleased to create the heaven with His right hand, and the earth with His left. He was also pleased to make a division of day and night, and He created angels appointed by His grace to chant hymns of praise by day, and others by night for the night watches. Thus it is said: "The Lord commandeth his grace in the daytime, and in the night his song with me" (Ps. XLII, 9). The former stand on the right hand, and the latter on the left, the latter hearkening to the song of the day and the former to the song of the night: and the singing they hear is the song of Israel, the holy.' R. Isaac said: 'Those that sing by night listen to the song of Israel by day, as it is written: "The companions hearken to thy voice" (S.S. VIII, 13).' Said R. Simeon: 'The angels of one degree with three divisions sing at night, and in darkness still their songs are heard, as it says, "She riseth while it is yet night, and giveth food to her household, and a portion to her maidens" (Prov. XXXI, 15).' R. Eleazar continued: 'On the first day ten things were created, and of these ten some belong to the day and its ways, and some to the night and the ways of the night. It is also known and believed that those angels who sing by night are the leaders of all other singers; and when on earth we living terrestrial creatures raise up our hearts in song, then those supernal beings gain an accession of knowledge, wisdom and understanding, so that they are enabled to perceive matters which even they had never before comprehended.' Said R. Nehemiah: 'Blessed is he who is worthy to perceive such singing, for, as we know and have been taught, he who is deemed worthy to comprehend this song becomes adept in doctrine and obtains wit to discern what has been and what will be. Solomon was found worthy of such knowledge, for thus taught R. Simeon: "David, peace be on him, was cognizant of it, and so could compose hymns and songs, many in number, in which he hinted concerning future events. He also became richly endowed with power in the

holy spirit, understood matters appertaining to the Torah and to Divine wisdom, and obtained a mastery of the holy tongue. Solomon, however, was gifted with a still greater knowledge of that song: he penetrated into the essence of wisdom, and so he wrote many proverbs and made a book of the song itself. This is the meaning of his words, "I gat me men singers (*sharim*) and women singers" (Eccl. II, 8); that is to say, he acquired the knowledge of the hymn sung by heavenly and terrestrial beings. And on account of this he called his book "The Song of Songs": the song of the supernal songs, the song containing all mysteries of the Torah and of Divine wisdom; the song wherein is power to penetrate into things that were and things that will be; the song sung by the supernal princes (*sharim* = *sarim*).'

Said R. Eleazar: 'Those heavenly princes stood in expectation until Levi was born; as soon as he was born they began to sing; as soon as Moses was born and Aaron was anointed high priest and the Levites were sanctified, the singing was perfected and the singers remained at their service.' He also said: 'At the hour when Levi was born, the heavenly choir began to sing: "O that thou wert as my brother that sucked the breast of my mother! [190a] Should I find thee without, indeed I would kiss thee, and they would not despise me" (S.S. VIII, 1). When the singers here below issued from the tribe of Levi and all of them were sanctified and entered into their service, and the two choirs, the heavenly and the earthly, were both hallowed, and sang in harmony so that the worlds were in unison and one King dwelt above them, then came Solomon and made a book of the hymning of the singers, wherein is enclosed heavenly wisdom.'

Said R. Judah: 'Why are the singers here below called Levites? Because they are joined closely (*lava* = to be joined to) to and united with (the singers) above in absolute unison. He who hears their singing, his soul is also joined closely to the upper world. Therefore Leah said (at the birth of Levi): "Now this time my husband will be joined unto me" (Gen. XXIX, 34).' Said R. Tanhum: 'The seed of Levi is always joined to the Shekinah: in Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and in all his descendants. Observe that when the supernal singers

desired to minister, they could not actually perform their function before the brothers Moses and Aaron and their sister Miriam were born.

'We have a tradition that when Levi was born, the Holy One, blessed be He, took him and chose him from among all his brethren, and settled him in the land. He then begat Kehat, who begat Amram, who begat Aaron and Miriam. Amram separated himself from his wife and then took her again. At that hour the heavenly singers began to chant, but the Holy One, blessed be He, rebuked them, and the chanting ceased, until He stretched out the line of His right hand (the attribute of Grace) towards Amram. Why was he called Amram? Because a people, higher than all the high ones (*'am ram* = high people), descended from him. And yet his name is not expressly mentioned (in connection with the birth of Moses). Why so? Because he secretly went away from his wife and secretly returned, so that no one should notice him. Wherefore it is written: "And there went a man"; it does not say "Amram". Likewise does it say: "And took to wife a daughter of Levi"; she also returned secretly, wherefore her name is not mentioned.'

AND THERE WENT A MAN. R. Abahu said: 'This was Gabriel, who is called "man" in the verse, "And the man Gabriel" (Dan. IX, 21), and it was he who went and brought her (Amram's wife) back to him.' Said R. Judah: 'It was Amram himself, only his name is not mentioned because this going to rejoin his wife was not his own idea but was inspired from above.'

R. Isaac said: 'In regard to the birth of Aaron and Miriam it does not say anything concerning their parents' espousal, but in connection with the birth of Moses it says: "And took to wife a daughter of Levi", which shows that the Shekinah is called after Levi, and Amram was not worthy to beget Moses until he obtained a portion in the Shekinah, and then he begat Moses. Hence it is written: "And she saw him that he was good" (Ex. II, 2).' R. Eleazar said: 'Amram was blessed with a son who was found worthy to be addressed by the great Voice, as it is written, "And God answered him by a

voice" (Ex. XIX, 19); and Amram himself had the privilege of being addressed by "the daughter of a voice" (*bat kol*, an echo of prophecy); "he took the daughter of Levi", that is to say, "the daughter of a voice". Therefore it is written, "and there went", meaning, he advanced from degree to degree until he reached this stage.'

We have been taught that when Moses was born the Holy One, blessed be He, attached His Name to him: it says of the child Moses, "he was good", and it says of God, "The Lord is good to all" (Ps. CXLV, 9) and "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (*Ibid.* XXIV, 9).

AND IT CAME TO PASS IN THE COURSE OF THOSE MANY DAYS, ETC. (Ex. II, 23). R. Joshua of Saknin said: 'It was the end of their exile when their bondage was most severe. As soon as the appointed time of delivery came, "the king of Egypt died": i.e. the angelic Chieftain of Egypt was degraded from his high estate. As soon as he fell, the Holy One, blessed be He, remembered Israel and heard their prayer.' Said R. Judah: 'The proof of this is that immediately after the words "The king of Egypt died" the text continues "and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God", which shows that until then their crying had not been answered.' R. Eleazar said: 'Observe the loving-kindness of the Holy One, blessed be He. When He has pity on Israel He suppresses the attribute of Justice and thus lets her obtain mercy. This is the meaning of the saying (T.B. Ber. 59*a*): "The holy One, blessed be He, lets drop two tears into the Ocean". What are the two tears?' R. Jose said: 'This saying is not [196] authentic, for R. Kattina, when he heard it from a certain sorcerer, said to him "You are a liar".' Said R. Eleazar: 'There is no need for us to accept the words of a sorcerer, we have a definite statement that in the ten crowns of the King there are two tears of the Holy One, blessed be He, namely two measures of chastisement, which comes from both of these tears, as it says: "These two (desolation and destruction) have happened unto thee" (Isa. LI, 19). And when the Holy One remembers His children, He drops them into the great Sea, which is the Sea of Wisdom, in order to sweeten them, and He turns the attribute of Justice into the attribute of Mercy, and takes compassion on Israel.' Said R. Judah: 'We read later, "And behold the Egyptian marched after them" (Ex. XIV, 10). These words are referred by R. Jose to the angelic prince of Egypt; how, then, can you say that the "king of Egypt" here refers to this same prince?' Said R. Isaac: 'The later Scriptural saying, in fact, confirms the former, for it does not say "the *king* of Egypt marched after them", but "the Egyptian", because he was not king any longer, having fallen from his former dignity.'

R. Jose said: 'It is written: "Behold a day cometh to the Lord" (Zech. XIV, 1); and again, "But the day shall be one and it shall be known to the Lord" (*Ibid.* V, 7). Are we to suppose from this that the other days are not the Lord's? It is, however, as R. Abba has said: all the other days are given over to the angelic principalities of the nations, but there is *one* day which will be the day of the Holy One, blessed be He, in which He will judge the heathen nations, and when their principalities shall fall from their high estate. Of that day it is written: "And the Lord alone shall be exalted on that day" (Isa. II, 11).' R. Abba said: 'It is written: "for my sword is bathed in heaven" (Isa. XXXIV, 5), which refers to the Lord's judgement on the supernal princes, the "sword" being a symbol of judgement.' R. Abba further said: 'The sword is identical with the execution of judgement, as it is written, "and he saw the angel of the Lord standing between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand" (1 Chron. XXI, 16). Now, can we imagine a drawn sword literally having been in the hand of the angel? But what it means is that he possessed the authorization to execute judgement.' Said R. Isaac: 'What do you make of the remark of R. Joshua, son of Levi, that "the angel of death once said to me: Were it not that I have regard for the dignity of mankind I would cut their throats as is done to an animal"?' R. Abba replied: 'This only means that he has authorization to execute judgement; and the same is meant by the phrase, "with his sword drawn in his hand" (Jos. V, 13).' 'If that be so, what is the meaning of "and he

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put his sword back into the sheath thereof" (1 Chron. XXI, 27)?' Said R. Abba: 'It signifies that the power delegated to him was restored to its rightful possessor, to Him to whom authority belongs.'

AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SIGHED. The sighing was in heaven for their sake. The "children of Israel" here are the supernal ones, namely those who carry on the divine service above.'

R. Isaac asked: 'When the Holy One, blessed be He, judges the family above (the angelic principalities), in what does the judgement consist?' R. Eleazar answered: 'He makes them pass through the fiery stream, and takes away from them their power as representatives of the nations and appoints the principalities representing other nations to rule instead of them.' 'But,' said R. Isaac, 'it says of the angelic world: "His ministers are a flaming fire" (Ps. CIV, 4) (and if so, what punishment is it for them to cross the fiery stream?).' To which R. Eleazar answered: 'There are different qualities of fire.'

R. Isaac said: 'We have to distinguish between the terms "sighing", "imploring", and "crying", all three of which are applied here to the children of Israel.' Said R. Judah: 'In fact they only implored and cried, as the sighing mentioned in the verse refers to the supernal beings.' 'What is the difference between imploring and crying?' Said R. Isaac: 'The former means prayer in actual words (Ps. XXXIX, 13; LXXXVIII, 14; XXX, 3), the latter crying without words.' R. Judah [202a] said: 'Hence crying is more poignant than all other expression of grief, because it is entirely a matter of the heart, as it says, "Their heart cried unto the Lord" (Lam. II, 18). This crying comes nearer to the Holy One, blessed be He, than imploring and praying in words, as it says, "If he (the orphan) cries unto me, I will surely hear his cry" (Ex. XXII, 20).' R. Berechiah said: 'When the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Samuel, "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king", what did Samuel do? "He cried unto the Lord all night" (1 Sam. XV, 11). He put aside everything and betook himself to crying, as this finds readiest access to

the Holy One, blessed be He. Thus we read here: "Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me" (Ex. III, 9). When one prays and weeps and cries so intensely that he is unable to find words to express his sorrow, his prayer is prayer in the truest sense, for it is in the heart, and shall never return unto him void.' Said R. Judah: 'Great is such crying in that it can effect a change in the divine sentence of judgement.' R. Isaac said: 'Great is such crying in that it dominates the supernal attribute of Justice.' Said R. Jose: 'Great is such crying in that it dominates both this world and the world to come, and makes man the heir of both, as it says, "They cried unto the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them out of their distresses" (Ps. CVII, 13).'

NOW MOSES KEPT THE FLOCK OF JETHRO HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, THE PRIEST OF MIDIAN. R. Simeon discoursed here on the text: "My beloved is mine and I am his; he among the lilies tendeth his flock." He said: 'Alas for mankind, they neither heed nor know! When God designed to create the universe, His thought compassed all worlds at once, and by means of this thought were they all created, as it says, "In wisdom hast thou made them all" (Ps. CIV, 24). By this thought—which is His Wisdom—were this world and the world above created. He stretched forth His right hand and created the world above; He stretched forth His left hand and created this world, as it says, "Mine hand hath laid the foundation of the earth and my right hand hath spanned the heavens; when I call unto them they stand up together" (Isa. XLIX, 13). All were created in one moment. And He made this world corresponding to the world above, and everything which is above has its counterpart here below, and everything here below has its counterpart in the sea; and yet all constitute a unity. He created angels in the upper worlds, human beings in this world, and the Leviathan in the sea, "to couple the tent together, that it might be one" (Ex. XXXVI, 18). He chose the supernal beings and He chose Israel; He did not call the beings of the upper worlds "sons", but the Israelites He did call sons, as it says: "Sons are ye to

the Lord your God" (Deut. XIV, 1). He calls them "sons" and they call Him "father", "For thou art our father" (LXIII, 16). Hence it says: "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine". He chose me and I chose Him also. "He among the lilies tendeth his flock": He feedeth among the lilies, although they are surrounded with thorns. Or again, as the lily is red and its juice is white, so does the Holy One, blessed be He, lead His world from the attribute of Justice to the attribute of Mercy, as it says: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isa. I, 18).'

R. Abba was once walking in company with R. Isaac. On the way they saw some lilies, and R. Abba plucked one. R. Jose met them. He said: 'Verily, the Shekinah is present here, for I see something in the hand of R. Abba which signifies that he has some great wisdom to impart, since I know that R. Abba would not have plucked this lily except with the view of teaching some esoteric lesson.' Said R. Abba: 'Sit down, my son, sit down.' They all sat down. R. Abba smelt the lily and said: 'What would the world be without smell? For I perceive that without smell the soul would pine away, and therefore we burn myrtle spices at the conclusion of the Sabbath.'

He then began to expound the verse: "My beloved is mine and I am my beloved's; he among the lilies tendeth his flock." 'What made me to belong to Him and Him to me? The fact that He feeds the world among lilies: as the lily has a sweet odour, is red, and yet turns white when pressed, and its aroma never evaporates, so the Holy One, blessed be He, guides the world. If it were not so, the world would cease to exist because of man's sin. Sin is red, as it says. "Though your sins be as scarlet"; [206] man puts the sacrificial animal on fire, which is also red; the priest sprinkles the red blood round the altar, but the smoke ascending to heaven is white. Thus the red is turned to white: the attribute of Justice is turned into the attribute of Mercy. Red is indeed the symbol of rigorous justice, and therefore the priests of Baal "cut themselves . . . till the blood gushed out upon them" (1 Kings XVIII, 28).' R. Isaac said: 'Red (blood) and white (fat) are offered for sacrifice, and the odour ascends from both. The

spices of incense are in part red and in part white—frankincense is white, pure myrrh is red—and the odour ascends from red and white. Moreover, it is written, "To offer unto me the fat and the blood" (Ezek. XLIV, 15)—again white and red. Hence as a substitute for this (since the destruction of the Temple) man sacrifices his own fat and blood (by fasting) and so obtains atonement. As the lily, which is red and white, is turned entirely into white by means of fire, so the sacrificial animal is turned entirely into white (smoke) by means of fire. Also at the present time (when there are no sacrifices) when a man offers in his fast his fat and his blood, the sacrifice has to go through fire if it is to be turned into white (bring down mercy), for, said R. Judah, fasting weakens the limbs and causes the body to burn, and just then is the appropriate time to offer up the fat and the blood on that fire; and it is this which is called "an altar of atonement". That is why R. Eleazar, when fasting, used to pray: "It is known to Thee, O my God and God of my fathers, that I have offered unto Thee my fat and my blood, and that I have heated them in the warmth of my body's weakness. May it be Thy will that the breath coming out of my mouth at this hour should be counted unto me as if it were the odour ascending from the sacrifice brought on the altar by fire, and grant me favour." Therefore prayer was instituted to take the place of sacrifices, provided that it is offered with this sacrificial intention.'

We may also explain our text as follows. As thorns are scattered among the lilies, so does the Holy One, blessed be He, permit in His world the wicked to be found among the righteous, for, as without the thorns the lilies could not exist, so would the righteous go unrecognized in the world were it not for the wicked, as R. Judah said: "How are the righteous recognized? By contrast with the wicked! If it were not for the one, the other would not be known."

Another explanation is that God governs the world for the space of six (the lily, *shoshana*, has six, *shesh*, leaves) years (millenniums), and the seventh is the (Messianic) Sabbath of the Lord.

AND MOSES TENDED THE FLOCK OF JETHRO HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, THE PRIEST OF MIDIAN. R. Hiya quoted in this connection the verse: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." 'As the shepherd', he said, 'leads the sheep to a good pasture by the water-springs, and deals with them tenderly, so it is written of the heavenly Shepherd, the Holy One, blessed be He, that "In pastures green He makes me lie, He leads me to the streams which run most pleasantly, my soul doth He restore".' Said R. Jose: 'A good shepherd keeps his flock in the open and will not let them stray into private ground, and so God keeps Israel in the straight path and will not let them turn right or left.' R. Jose also said: 'If a leader of Israel is a wise shepherd, he willingly takes upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven and leads his flock in accordance with it; but if he is wise in his own conceit, "there is more hope of a fool than of him" (Prov. XXXVI, 12).' R. Judah said: 'Moses was a wise shepherd and knew how to treat his flock. He was like David, who was "tending the sheep" (1 Sam. XVI, 11), and because he was very wise, [21a] and treated his flock with great consideration and care, God made him king over all Israel. Why did Moses tend sheep and not oxen?' R. Judah said: 'Israel are called sheep, as it says: "And ye, my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are men" (Ezek. XXXIV, 31), and again, "As the flock of holy things, as the flock of Jerusalem" (*Ibid.* XXXVI, 38). As the sheep sacrificed on the altar becomes a means of propitiation, enabling the sacrificer to inherit the world to come, so does Israel enable her leader, if he be a good shepherd, to inherit the world to come. As the shepherd tends with special care the newly-born lambs and carries them in his bosom, or gently leads them after their mother, and is compassionate with them, so must Israel's shepherd be compassionate and not cruel. Thus Moses said: "Thou sayest unto me, Carry them in thy bosom" (Num. XI, 12). As the good shepherd saves the sheep from wolves and lions, so does the good shepherd of Israel save them from pagan nations, from judgement here below and from judgement above, and prepares them for the life of the world to come. Just such a faithful shepherd was Moses, and the Holy One, blessed be He, foresaw that he would shepherd Israel as he shepherded Jethro's flock, the males as they required, and the females likewise according to their needs. Moreover, Moses "tended the flock of Jethro", not his own sheep, though he must have possessed some, for, as R. Jose remarked, "Jethro was a rich man, and, surely, he must have given to his son-in-law sheep and cattle!" Yet he did not tend his own sheep, for then people might have said, "he treats them so well because they are his own". Although Jethro was a "priest of Midian", that is to say, a pagan, yet because he was kind to Moses, the latter served him well and tended his flock with all due care in good and fat pasture.'

AND HE LED THE FLOCK TO THE BACK OF THE WILDERNESS. Said R. Jose: 'From the time when Moses was born, the holy spirit never left him. He discerned by means of the holy spirit that that desert was sanctified and prepared by God as the place for Israel's acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven (the Sinaitic Law), therefore "He led the flock to the back of the wilderness"—not to the wilderness, as he did not wish them to tread that spot.'

AND CAME TO THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD, TO HOREB. He came alone, without his flock. Said R. Jose: 'When a magnet becomes aware of a piece of iron, it instinctively leaps towards it. So Moses, as soon as he saw the mountain, was attracted towards it.' R. Abba said: 'Verily, Moses and the mountain were prepared for one another even from the six days of Creation. On that day the mountain moved towards Moses, and seeing that Moses was about to ascend, it stopped, and both man and mountain were filled with joy.' Said R. Jannai: 'How did Moses know it was the mountain of God? Because he saw birds circling round it with outstretched wings, but never flying over it.' R. Isaac said: 'Moses saw birds flying towards him from the direction of the mountain and falling at his feet. This showed him plainly the character of the mountain, so he "led his flock to the back of the wilderness" and went up alone.'

AND THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED UNTO HIM IN A FLAME OF FIRE OUT OF THE MIDST OF A BUSH. R. Tanhum said: 'It was the moment of the evening offering (*minḥah*), a moment when the attribute of Justice is in the ascendant.' R. Johanan interposed, remarking: 'Is it not written: "By day the Lord will command his mercy" (Ps. XLII, 9), showing that mercy predominates as long as there is daylight?' Said R. Isaac: 'From sunrise until the sun declines westward it is called "day", and the attribute of Mercy is in the ascendant: after that it is called "evening", which is the time for the attribute of Severity. We derive the same lesson from the text: "Between the evenings ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread" (Ex. XVI, 12). "Between the evenings"—this is the time [21b] of the sway of Severity—then "ye shall eat flesh", with the result, as the Scripture says, that "while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people" (Num. XI, 33), for between-the-evenings is under the sway of Severity—" and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread", the morning being identified with Mercy, as Scripture says, "the mercy of God endureth all the day" (Ps. LII, 3), to wit, in the morning, as it says: "And God called the light day", referring to the morning.' R. Tanhum said: 'The one is symbolized by red, the other by white. The between-the-evenings period is red, so it is written, "between the evenings ye shall eat flesh"; whereas the morning hours are white, so it is written, "and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread".' R. Isaac cited the verse: "And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it between the evenings" (Ex. XII, 6), the reason being, he said, that that is the time for the execution of judgement. R. Judah said: 'This we derive from the ordinance concerning the two daily offerings, the one answering to the attribute of Mercy, the other to the attribute of Severity. So Scripture says, "The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning" (Ex. XXIX, 39), where the designation "the one" signifies the special one, to wit, the one answering the attribute of Mercy; whereas the second lamb to be offered up between the evenings is associated with Severity, being

analogous to the second day of Creation, of the works of which it is not said "that it was good".' Said R. Tanhum: 'It is for this reason that Isaac instituted the Afternoon-prayer (*Minḥah*), namely, to mitigate the then ruling Severity; whereas Abraham instituted Morning-prayer, corresponding to the attribute of Mercy.' R. Isaac said: 'This idea may be derived from the verse saying: "Woe unto us, for the day declineth, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out!" (Jer. VI, 4), "the day declineth" being an allusion to the attribute of Mercy, and "the shadows of the evening" signifying the attribute of Severity.'

Our teachers have asked: 'Why at the time when Moses went up into Mount Sinai did the theophany take the form of a flaming fire, which is the symbol of Severity?' The answer given by R. Jacob was: 'It was appropriate to the moment, which was one of Severity.' R. Jose said: 'It was symbolic of the events associated with that spot. For of this spot it is written: "and (he) came to the mountain of God, unto Horeb", a place of which it is also written: "Also in Horeb ye made the Lord wroth" (Deut. IX, 8). It is written further: "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a thorn-bush", as a symbol that the wicked are one day to become "as thorns cut down, that are burned in the fire" (Isa. XXXIII, 12).' R. Judah said: 'We learn from here the mercifulness of the Holy One, blessed be He, towards the wicked. Thus it is written, "and, behold, the thorn-bush burned with fire", to wit, to execute judgement against the wicked: yet "the thorn-bush was not consumed", indicating that they will not be utterly exterminated. "Burning in fire" is certainly an allusion to the fire of Gehinnom; but "the thorn-bush was not consumed", to show that even so they will not be destroyed utterly.'

The following is an alternative explanation of these verses: AND THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED UNTO HIM IN A FLAME OF FIRE. Why in a flame of fire to Moses and not to other prophets? Said R. Judah: 'Moses was not like other prophets: fire had no dominion over him, as it is written: "And Moses drew near unto the thick clouds where God is" (Ex. XX, 21).' Said R. Abba: 'This peculiarity of

Moses has to be explained in the light of the higher (esoteric) wisdom. He was "drawn out of the water" (Ex. I, 10) (i.e. the attribute of *Hesed* or Grace), and he who is drawn out of water has no fear of fire, and we have learnt that "from the place whence Moses was formed no other man was formed".' R. Johanan said: 'Moses was conversant with all ten degrees (of wisdom), as it is written: "He is faithful in all my house" (Num. XII, 7), and not merely "He is the faithful of my house". Blessed is the man to whom his Master testifies thus!' Said R. Dimi: 'But according to R. Joshua ben Levi, the words "no prophet arose in Israel like unto Moses" suggest that among the nations of the world there was one like unto him, namely Balaam.' The other replied: 'Truly, thou art right', and said no more. When R. Simeon appeared, they consulted him and he said: 'Shall resin be mixed with sweet-smelling balsam? (i.e. how can ye compare Balaam with Moses?) It is, however, true that Balaam was the counterpart of Moses. As the works of the one were from above, so were the other's from below. Moses wrought his works by means of the holy Crown of the All-highest King, Balaam by means of the unholy crowns from below. Hence, "The children of Israel slew Balaam the son of Beor, the soothsayer" (Jos. XIII, 22). And if thou desirest to know more, ask his ass!' R. Jose came and kissed his hand. He said: 'The desire of my heart has been fulfilled. For I see that there is a duality in the universe of upper and lower beings, Right and Left, Love and Justice, Israel and the heathen. Israel uses the upper, holy Crowns; the pagans the lower, unholy ones; Israel draws her life-substance from the Right, the heathen nations from the Left; and thus the superior prophets are separated from the inferior prophets—the prophets of holiness from the prophets of evil.' Said R. Judah: [22a] 'As Moses excelled all prophets in Israel in respect of the superior, holy prophecy, so Balaam excelled all other pagan prophets and soothsayers in respect of the inferior, unholy prophecy. In any case, Moses was above, Balaam below, and there were numerous stages between them.'

R. Johanan said in the name of R. Isaac: 'Moses was

anxious in his mind concerning Israel, lest they should succumb under their burdens, as it says, "He looked on their burdens" (Ex. II, 11). Therefore "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire . . . and he looked and behold, the bush burned . . . and the bush was not consumed", to show that although their lives were made bitter with hard bondage, yet, like the bush, they would not be consumed. Blessed are the Israelites for that the Holy One, blessed be He, separated them from all nations and called them "children", as it says: "Children are ye to the Lord your God" (Deut. XIV. 1).'

WAERA

Ex. VI, 2–IX, 35

AND GOD SPAKE UNTO MOSES, ETC. R. Abba began his reflections on this portion with the verse: *Trust the Lord for ever* (lit. unto *'Ad*), *for in JAH YHVH is fashioning of worlds* (lit. rock of ages) (Isa. XXVI, 4). 'All mankind', he said, 'should cleave to the Holy One, blessed be He, and put their trust in Him, in order that their strength should be drawn from the sphere called *'Ad*[1], which sustains the universe and binds it into an indissoluble whole. This *'Ad* (lit. unto) is "the desire of the everlasting hills" (Gen. XLIX, 26), to wit, the two transcendent "Mothers", the year of Jubilee[2] and the year of Remission[3] (cf. Zohar, Gen. 247*b*); the desire of the former being to crown that sphere with glory, with the outpouring of blessings and wells of sweet water; whilst the longing of the other is to receive from *'Ad* these same blessings and illuminations. Therefore it says, "Trust the Lord unto *'Ad*" (i.e. contemplate the worlds of emanation only as far as the sphere *'Ad*), for beyond that is a hidden region, so transcendent that it passes all understanding, the very source whence the worlds were designed and came into being. Up to this point only is it permissible to contemplate the Godhead, but not beyond, for it is wholly recondite. This is *JAH YHVH*, from whence all worlds were fashioned.' Said R. Judah: 'We have a direct Scriptural proof for this, for it says, "Ask of the days that are past . . . since the day that God created man upon earth, and ask from the one side of the heaven unto the other . . ." (Deut. IV, 32). Up to this point man may investigate, but no further.' Another explanation of this verse is as follows: Man must always trust the Holy One, blessed be He. He who trusts Him will never be confounded by the world (Ps. XXV, 2). He who depends entirely on the Holy Name is firmly established in the world, as the world itself is sustained by this Name: by the two letters *JH* (*Jah*) "the Lord [22*b*] designed the

[1] *Tiferet*. [2] *Binah*. [3] *Malkuth*.

worlds", this world and the world to come. This world was created by the attribute of Justice, and is sustained by the same attribute, in order that humanity should base its life on justice and not depart from the way of righteousness.

AND ELOHIM SPAKE UNTO MOSES AND HE SAID TO HIM I AM YHVH. It is written above (v. 22): "And Moses said, Lord (*Adonai*), wherefore hast thou evil entreated this people?" What prophet could speak with such boldness as this save Moses, who knew that another and superior degree (viz. *YHVH*) was awaiting him? R. Isaac said: 'Moses, who was "faithful in God's house", addressed Him without fear and trembling, like a steward who has charge over the household.' According to another explanation, the words "And God spake and said unto him, I am *YHVH*" mean that the manifestation was in both attributes, in Justice and Mercy, both fitly framed and joined together. R. Simeon said that they were manifested not unitedly but successively, as is indicated by the expression, "And Elohim spake . . . and said unto him, I am *YHVH*": stage after stage. Said R. Jose: 'Moses would certainly have been punished for the boldness of his language had he not been "steward of the household" and man of God. He was like a man who had married the king's daughter, and having some contention with her, spoke harshly to her. She was about to answer him, when her father, the king, appeared. Seeing him, she stopped and he took up the word. He said to the husband: "Knowest thou not that I am the king, and the harsh words thou speakest against my daughter, thou speakest as it were against me?" So Moses complained against Adonai (the Shekinah) and was answered by Elohim (the King). AND I APPEARED, ETC. God was here like a king who had an unmarried daughter, and also had a personal friend. When he wanted to say something to the friend, he used to send his daughter to him to speak for him. Then the daughter was married, and on the day of her marriage the king proclaimed: "Call my daughter from now 'the Mistress, the Matrona'," and to her he said: "Until now I was wont to speak through thee to those who desired audience with me, but now I shall speak directly to thy

husband, and he will transmit my messages." One day the husband spoke harshly to the princess in the king's presence, and before she could answer him the king took up the word. He said: "Am I not the king, with whom no one dared to speak but through my daughter, and have I not given my daughter to thee, and spoken with thee directly, a privilege not granted to any other?" Similarly God said to Moses: "Before the Shekinah was espoused I appeared to the Patriachs as *El Shaddai*, and they could not speak directly with Me, only through My Daughter the Shekinah, and thou wast the first one to whom I spoke face to face, and now at the very outset thou darest in My Presence to speak to My Daughter in such a fashion!"

R. Jose interpreted the verse: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the universe, and they that dwell therein; for he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the rivers" (Ps. XXIV, 2–3) in the following way. "The earth" is the Holy Land of Israel, which is the first to imbibe sustenance and receive blessing from God, the rest of the world then receiving from it; "the seas" refer to [23a] the seven pillars which are the foundation of the earth, and over which rules the Sea of Kinnereth (R. Judah, however, maintained that the latter is filled by the others); "the rivers" are connected with the "river which went out of Eden to water the garden" (Gen. II, 10). It is to be noticed that this Holy Land (the Shekinah) is called "the land of Israel". Why, then, did Jacob, who is Israel, not rule over it like Moses? The reason is—as already pointed out—that Jacob became the owner of the "house which is below" and left the "house which is above", though in the twelve tribes and in the seventy branches he made preparation herein for the "house which is above"; Moses, on the other hand, left the "house which is below" and took the "house which is above". The former experienced the Divine manifestation as "El Shaddai", but God did not speak with him in the higher grade designated by *YHVH*.

AND I APPEARED UNTO ABRAHAM, UNTO ISAAC, AND (*v*) UNTO JACOB. The letter *Vau* in connection with

Jacob is, acording to R. Hiya, symbolic of the superiority of the Divine manifestation to Jacob over that which was vouchsafed to the other two: his is the unifying, harmonizing, grade; and yet he was not worthy to use it as Moses did.

AND I HAVE ALSO ESTABLISHED MY COVENANT WITH THEM, TO GIVE THEM THE LAND OF CANAAN: as a reward for the covenant of circumcision; and only of those who are faithful members of this covenant can it be said that they "possess" the land, which is a heritage of the righteous, as it is written: "Thy people shall be all righteous, they shall possess the land" (Isa. LX, 21). Even Joseph was not called "righteous" before he guarded the sign of the covenant (at the time of temptation).

R. Eleazar once asked R. Simeon his father, in the presence of R. Abba: 'Why is it said here "I appeared", instead of "I spoke to Abraham, etc."?' R. Simeon replied: 'My son, this contains a deep mystery. Observe now. There are colours disclosed and undisclosed, this being a part of the mystery of Faith, but men neither know nor reflect on these matters. The visible colours were not perceived by any human being before the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Therefore it says "and I appeared". And what are these visible colours? Those of *El Shaddai*, the reflection of higher colours. But these latter are hidden, and Moses alone perceived them. The Patriarchs, however, were not entirely ignorant of them; since they apprehended those undisclosed ones through the visible ones which they already knew. It is written: "And the wise shall be resplendent as the splendour of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness shall be like the stars for ever and ever." The "wise" is he who by the power of his own contemplation attains to the perception of profound mysteries which cannot be expressed in words. The "firmament" is the "firmament of Moses" (his grade of Divine knowledge), which is set at the centre and whose splendour is veiled. This firmament is above that other which is non-resplendent and the colours of which are visible and not so bright as the invisible. There are four lights (i.e. Emanations), three of which are recondite and

one disclosed. There is one which sheds light abroad (*Hesed*); one which shines for itself only (*Geburah*), being like the heavens in purity; one of purple hue which gathers light into itself (*Tifereth*); and one which is of itself lightless (*Malkuth*), but which looks up to the others and reflects them as a lamp reflects the sun. The first three are recondite and brood over the one which is [23b] disclosed. (Of all this the eye is the symbol. In the eye three colours are visible, but none of these shines, because they are non-luminous. They are the parallel of those lights which are revealed; and it was by means of these visible colours that the Patriarchs were enabled to discern the colours which are luminous but invisible—that is, those colours of which Moses alone had cognizance, which were concealed from all others but revealed to him in that firmament to which he had attained, and which are above the visible colours.) To understand this mystery, close thine eye and press thine eyeball, and thou wilt discern radiating and luminous colours which can only be seen with closed eyes.[1] For this reason we say that Moses was possessed of the "luminous mirror", which is above the "non-luminous", which alone is vouchsafed to others. The Patriarchs, however, were able by means of the revealed colours to conceive of those that were concealed. This is the meaning of the words, "I appeared unto Abraham, etc", namely, in those visible colours, "but by My Name YHVH was I not known to them", namely, in the supernal hidden luminous colours, which only Moses was privileged to behold. The closed eye sees the mirror of light: the open eye sees the mirror which is not luminous. Therefore in regard to the lightless mirror, the term "see" is used, because it is discernible, but in regard to the luminous mirror the term "know" is used, because it is in concealment.' Then came R. Eleazar and R. Abba and kissed R. Simeon's hand, and R. Abba wept and said: 'Alas for the world when thou,

[1] The colours thus seen are called *luminous*, because they are not attached to any material background. The idea seems to be that just as these can only be seen when the eye is closed, so the higher emanations can only be grasped when the mind completely abstracts itself from the perceptions of sense.

master, shalt be removed from it! It will become an orphan without thee; for who will then illumine the words of the Torah?' He then went on to quote David's greeting to Nabal: "Be well (*leḥai*, lit. thus for life!), and peace be to thee, etc." 'Surely,' he said, 'David must have been aware of Nabal's wickedness, and how could he greet him thus? It was, however, New Year's day, the day when the Holy One judges the world, and David's intention in using both expressions, "Thus for life", and "and thou art peace", was to address Him from whom all life and all peace come, in order to make a fitting profession of faith. And greeting a righteous person with *Shalom!* (peace, harmony) is like greeting the Holy One Himself, especially when addressed to thee, O master, who in thine own person representest the harmony between the above and the below! But it is not allowed to greet thus a wicked person, and yet, if it be unavoidable, there is no insincerity involved in the phrase when outwardly addressed to the person concerned, but inwardly intended for God.'

R. Hezekiah discoursed on the verse: *Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile* (Ps. XXXII, 2). He said: 'How blind are the children of men who neither see nor perceive what the foundation is of their existence in the world! Behold, when the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world, He formed man in His own image, so disposing his capacities as to enable him to study the Torah and walk in His way. Therefore man was created from the dust of the lower Sanctuary; and the four winds of the world united at that place which afterwards was named the House of Holiness, and these four were then joined to the four elements of the lower world: fire, air, earth, and water. And when these winds and these elements were thus mingled, the Holy One, blessed be He, formed one body of wondrous perfection. Therefore it is plain that the substances composing man's body belong to two worlds, namely, the world below and the world above.' Said R. Simeon: 'The first four elements have a deep significance for the faithful: they are the progenitors of all worlds, and symbolize the mystery of the supernal Chariot

of Holiness. Also the four elements of fire, air, earth, and water have a deep significance. From them come gold, silver, copper, and iron, and beneath these [24a] other metals of a like kind. Mark well this ! Fire, air, earth, and water are the sources and roots of all things above and below, and on them are all things grounded. And in each of the four winds these elements are found—fire in the North, air in the East, water in the South, earth in the West ; and the four elements are united with the four winds—and all are one. Fire, water, air, and earth: gold, silver, copper, and iron; north, south, east, and west—these make altogether twelve; yet are they all one. Fire is in the left, at the side of the North, for fire has the energy of warmth, and the power of dryness is strong in it, and the North is just the reverse, and so the two are commingled. Water is in the right, in the side of the South, and the Holy One mixes the warmth and dryness of the South with the coldness and moisture of the water, and they become one as with the previous combination. The North is cold and moist, and its element, fire, hot and dry, and, contrariwise, the South is warm and dry, and its element, water, cold and moist, and so the Holy One mixes them. For water comes from the South, enters into the North, and flows again from the North; and fire comes out from the North, and enters into the South, and it is from the South that powerful heat goes out into the world. For the Holy One makes one borrow from the other as He sees right. In a similar fashion He proceeds with the air and the East. Observe now. Fire from one side, water from the other: there is opposition. Then comes the air (wind, spirit) between them and brings them together and they become one, as it is written: "And the spirit (air) of God brooded over the water" (Gen. 1, 2). For fire is aloft and water is on the surface of the earth, and air enters between them, unites both elements and makes peace between them. Earth has water, air, fire, above it and receives from all the three. Observe, further, that the East is warm and moist, and the air is warm and moist. Hence the warm-moist composite can take hold of both sides—with its warmth the fire, and with its moisture the water, and thus end the conflict between fire and water. The earth is cold and dry,

therefore it can receive all the others—fire, water, and air—and all can accomplish their work in it. She receives from all of them, therefore through their influence can produce nourishment for the whole world. Now the side of the West, which is cold, unites with the North, which is cold and moist, for cold unites with cold, and from the other side, the dry, West unites with the South, which is warm and dry, and thus the West attaches itself to both sides. In the same fashion the South is united with the East on its warm side, and the East with the North in virtue of its moisture. Thus we find united: South-East, North-East, North-West, South-West, and all are contained in one another in mutual intermingling. In this way the North brings forth gold, which is produced by the side of the fire-power, as it is written, "Gold cometh from the North" (Job. XXXVII, 22). For when fire joins with the earth gold is produced, as it is written: "As for the earth . . . it hath lumps of gold" (*Ibid.* XXXVIII, 5–6). When water is united with earth, the cold with the moist brings forth silver, and so the earth is united with two sides, gold and silver, and situated between them. Air joins to water and also [24b] to fire and produces an amalgam which is "the colour of polished copper" (Ezek. I, 7). As to the earth mentioned above, when it is by itself in its coldness and dryness it brings forth iron; therefore it says: "If the iron be blunt" (Eccl. X, 10). Earth, however, combines with all the other elements, and all work through it according to their several ways. For without earth there is no gold, no silver, no copper. For each element imparts of its character to the other to form a compound, and earth mingles with all, because the two sides, fire and water, are attached to it. Air also joins with it on account of those two, and acts upon it. Now we find that the earth, when united with them, brings forth also secondary products resembling their primary compounds. Thus corresponding to gold it brings forth the green dross which is subordinate to gold and resembles it; corresponding to silver, lead; corresponding to the superior copper, the inferior, tin; corresponding to iron, however, it brings forth only iron, and so it is said: "Iron with iron together" (Prov. XXVII, 17).

'Fire, air, water, and earth are originally all united one with the other, and there is no separation between them. But when the earth-dust began to generate its products were no longer united like the supernal elements, as it says: "From thence it was parted and became into four heads" (Gen. II, 10). In this was separation; for the earthy, when it generated in the power of the three upper elements, brought forth four streams, where precious stones are found. These precious stones are twelve in number, distributed in all the four cardinal directions, and corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel: "And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names" (Ex. XXVIII, 21). Observe that though all these supernal sides of which we spoke are united and bound up one with another, and form the foundation of things above and things below, yet is air (spirit) superior to them all, as it is the substance of all, without which nothing would live, and the soul exists only through the spirit, for if the air were to fail, even for a moment, the soul would not be. This is hinted in the words: "Also when the soul is without knowledge it is not good" (Prov. XIX, 2): soul without spirit "is not good", and cannot exist. Note, further, that those twelve stones correspond to the twelve oxen under the sea of brass which was in the Temple (1 Kings VII, 25). Therefore the princes, the heads of the tribes, sacrificed twelve oxen (Num. VII, 3). All this is a deep mystery, and he who comprehends these words comprehends a mystery of the supernal wisdom, in which is the root of all things.'

R. Simeon concluded: 'See now the truth of R. Hezekiah's saying, that when the Holy One created man He took the dust of the lower Sanctuary, but for the making of his soul He chose the dust of the upper Sanctuary. Just as in the formation of man's body from the dust of the lower Sanctuary, three cosmic elements were combined, so in the formation of his soul from the dust of the upper Sanctuary, further elements, to the number of three, were mingled, and so man was completely formed. And this is the significance of the words: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." When does the Lord not impute iniquity? When there is no guile in his spirit. Moses was perfected to a higher degree than were the Patriarchs, since the Holy One spoke to him from a higher grade than to them, and Moses stood within the Palace of the King. Hence it says: "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of EL SHADDAI, but by My name YHVH was I not known to them"; and so we affirm.'

WHEREFORE SAY UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, I AM THE LORD, AND I WILL BRING YOU OUT FROM UNDER THE BURDENS OF THE EGYPTIANS, ETC. Said R. Judah: 'These words are in the wrong order, and should read, firstly, "I will redeem you", and then "I will bring you out". The reason, however, why bringing out is put first is that God desired to announce to them first the best promise of all.' To which R. Jose remarked: 'But does not the greatest promise of all come last, namely, "I will take you to me for a people and I will be [25a] to you a God" (v. 7)?' R. Judah replied: 'Deliverance from Egypt was the chief concern of the people then, because they despaired of escaping on account of the magical arts with which the Egyptians held fast their prisoners; hence it came first in order in the proclamation, followed by the promise of deliverance from bondage once and for all, as they might have been afraid that the Egyptians would enslave them again. Then came the promise of redemption, namely, that He would not merely free them from Egypt and then leave them to themselves: this was followed by the proclamation that He would make them His people; and finally came the promise that He would bring them into their own land (v. 7).'

[1]AND I WILL TAKE YOU TO ME FOR A PEOPLE AND I WILL BE TO YOU A GOD, AND YE SHALL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD. This is the first of all commandments, the root of all precepts of the Law: the knowledge of God in a general way, namely that there is a Supernal Ruler, Lord of the universe and of all life, Creator of heaven and earth and all their hosts. But this general knowledge of God must lead on to a particular knowledge

[1] This section is from the *True Shepherd* (v. Introduction, vol. I, p. xiii).

of Him. This is the inner meaning of man being "male and female together". When the Israelites were about to come out of Egypt they had no knowledge of the Holy One, blessed be He, and Moses had to teach them the first principle of Divine knowledge. Without this doctrine they would not have believed in all those signs and wonders which they were about to experience. At the end of the forty years in the desert, after having been instructed by Moses in all the commandments, both in those which are directly connected with the Holy Land and in those which are not, he taught them in an individual, particular way, the knowledge of God, as it says: "Know therefore this day and consider it in thine heart that the Lord he is God in heaven above and in the earth beneath; there is none else" (Deut. IV, 39). "That the Lord (YHVH) is God (ELOHIM)", this is the particular aspect of cognition. This particular mode of knowledge is essentially identical with the general concept of God as Creator and Lord. Should the question arise: Is not "the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. I, 7, i.e. the first commandment)? the answer would be that the fear of the Lord (which is connected with the commandments) must precede the second, the particular grade of knowledge, although, of course, one has to fear the Lord even before one has an intellectual knowledge of Him in His revelational individual aspects. Thus the ultimate and whole duty of man is to know the Holy One, blessed be He, in a general and in a particular way. The verse, "I am the first, and I am the last" (Isa. XLIV, 7) has a symbolic reference to this twofold mode of knowledge; "I am the first" to the general apprehension of Him, and "I am the last" to the particular, and these two are one. As a result of a proper knowledge of God as Creator and Lord, the two hundred and forty-eight organs of the human body become organs of the two hundred and forty-eight positive commandments of the Law, and man's life becomes something complete and harmonious, and the particular, individual, knowledge of God causes salvation and blessing to enter into every day of the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year (corresponding to the three hundred and sixty-five negative commandments). For as it is above so it is below: as all the supernal "days" are filled with blessing by the (heavenly) Man, so are the days here below filled with blessing through the agency of Man (i.e. the righteous). Blessed are the Israelites in this world through having the commandments of the Torah! The word "Man" is applied to them only, but not to the heathen (Ezek. XXXIV, 31), therefore they must endeavour to keep the commandments with zeal and diligence, that all may become *one* in the inner meaning of Man. When the Holy One gave Israel the Torah on Mount Sinai, his first word was "*Anokhi*", I. This "*Anokhi*" contains many mysteries; here, however, we are concerned with the fact that

it is the first of all commandments, the root of all precepts of the Law: "I am the Lord". This is the general axiom. The particular is "thy God". The same is true of "The Lord *thy* God is a consuming fire" (Deut. IV, 24). [25b]

AND MOSES SPAKE SO UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, BUT THEY HEARKENED NOT UNTO MOSES FOR ANGUISH OF SPIRIT. What is the meaning of "anguish of spirit" (lit. shortness of breath)? R. Judah interpreted the expression literally, "they had no rest from their labours, no time to breathe". But R. Simeon saw a mystical significance in the expression; the "Jubilee" (the world of *Binah*, the abode of transcendental "Freedom") was as yet not in manifestation to give them spiritual rest, and the later Spirit (*Malkuth*) was not yet able to exercise its functions, and so there was anguish to this Spirit.

AND MOSES SPAKE BEFORE THE LORD, SAYING: BEHOLD, THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL HAVE NOT HEARKENED UNTO ME, HOW THEN SHALL PHARAOH HEAR ME, WHO AM OF UNCIRCUMCISED LIPS? How did Moses dare say this? Had not the Holy One already promised him, when he said that he was not eloquent, that He "will be with his mouth" (Ex. IV, 10–12)? Or did the Holy One not keep His promise? However, there is here an inner meaning. Moses was then in the grade of "Voice", and the grade of "Utterance" was then in exile. Hence he said: "How shall Pharaoh hear me", seeing that my "utterance" is in bondage to him, I being only "voice", and lacking "utterance". Therefore God joined with him Aaron, who was "utterance" without "voice". When Moses came, the Voice appeared, but it was "a voice without speech". This lasted until Israel approached Mount Sinai to receive the Torah. Then the Voice was united with the Utterance, and the word was spoken, as it says, "and the Lord *spake* all these words" (Ex. XX, 1). Then Moses was in full possession of the Word, Voice and Word being united. That was the cause of Moses' complaint (v. 23), that he lacked the word save at the time when it broke forth in complaint and "God spake to Moses"

(VI, 2). On this occasion the word began to function, but it ceased again, as the time was not yet ripe; hence the verse continues, "and said to him, I am the Lord" (*Ibid.*). Only at the giving of the Law Moses was, as it were, healed of his impediment, when the Voice and the Utterance were united in him as their organ. Before that event the power which is Utterance guided Israel in the desert, but without expressing itself until they came to Sinai. [26a] R. Judah interpreted in the same sense the verse from the Song of Songs (v, 5–6): "I rose up to open to my beloved, but my beloved hath withdrawn himself and was gone". As long as the Community of Israel is in exile the Voice is withdrawn from her and the Word does not function, as it says, "I am dumb with silence" (Ps. XXXIX, 3); and even when the Word does awaken, "my Beloved hath withdrawn Himself", i.e. it suddenly ceases, as it did at first with Moses.

The Voice went on: "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob." The "and" (the *Vau*) symbolizes Jacob's superiority over the others, according to R. Judah. Said R. Jose: 'What of the verse, "I am the God of Abraham and of Isaac" (Gen. XXVIII, 13)?' R. Judah replied: 'When that was said, Jacob was included in Isaac, who was blind at that time, and a blind man is counted dead; for as long as a person is alive, the Holy Name is not joined to his name (i.e. the God of so-and-so), therefore Jacob was included in Isaac and not directly mentioned; but Jacob being now dead, the Holy Name could be connected with him. "By El Shaddai", that is to say, through the "non-luminous mirror", not the "luminous". This, however, does not mean that they were conversant with the "Female" only and no higher grade, for it continues: "And I have also established my Covenant with them", indicating that the Covenant was united with the Female in their perception. He who has the privilege of being a member of the Covenant, inherits the Land, as it says, "I have established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan".' Said R. Simeon: 'It is written, "Be ye afraid of the sword, for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is judgement". The "sword" is the one of which it says, "it shall avenge the covenant"; (Lev. XXVI, 25), it is the punishment awaiting him who nullifies the (sign) of the Covenant and thereby also the union of which it is a symbol. But he who brings the Covenant into its place and so guards it in purity becomes a channel of blessing both to the upper and lower worlds. Hence it says here, "Be ye afraid of the sword", for if this commandment does not awaken the sense of awe in a man, no other commandment will. Observe that as soon as the Israelites bestirred themselves to approach the Holy One and cried before Him, He "remembered His covenant". "Remembering" (*Zachor*) is always connected with the Covenant and its sign, for it is the awakening of the longing for union in the supernal spheres. Hence "I remembered my Covenant", to connect it with its proper place, and therefore "say unto the children of Israel, I am YHVH" (v. 6.)'

AND THE LORD SPAKE UNTO MOSES AND AARON AND GAVE THEM A CHARGE UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AND UNTO PHARAOH. According to R. Jose, the charge consisted in this, that they should speak gently to Israel [26b] and respectfully to Pharaoh. Gently to Israel, for, although for the time being they were slaves, yet they were of royal descent. For this reason the section dealing with the names of the heads of the tribal families comes immediately after this verse (VV. 14–25). R. Hiya says that this is to show that they did not change their customs not intermarry with the natives. But according to R. Aha, the purpose is to introduce Moses and Aaron and to show that they were worthy to bring forth the people and to act as spokesmen before Pharaoh, for among the heads of the tribal families there were none like them.

AND ELEAZAR, AARON'S SON, TOOK HIM ONE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF PUTIEL TO WIFE; AND SHE BARE HIM PHINEAS: THESE ARE THE HEADS OF THE FATHERS OF THE LEVITES ACCORDING TO THEIR FAMILIES. Why does it say "these are the heads" when the only one mentioned is Phineas? The truth is that because he saved

thousands in Israel from the plague (v. Num. XXV, 8), by making atonement for the children of Israel and their chiefs, they are all included in him and he is referred to as "these". This expression also suggests that he in his own person compensated for the loss of the heads of the Levites (Nadab and Abihu, v. Lev. X): they sinned and were burned, but their souls found their abode in Phineas. They separated the sign of the Covenant from its place (by leaving no issue), and he came and united it again, therefore the heritage and spirit of both of them were given to him. All this is suggested already here. In fact, Phineas is mentioned here because at first the Holy One, foreseeing that Aaron's two sons would impair the Covenant, did not desire to join Aaron with Moses in his mission, but then seeing that Phineas would restore the Covenant and repair the mischief caused by them, considered him to be after all worthy, as it is written concerning him: "These are that Aaron" (v. 26), meaning, "it is the same (worthy) Aaron". It is further written: "These are (lit. this is) that Aaron and Moses". The singular number "this" suggests the oneness of the two, the fusion of "wind" (=Moses, who symbolizes the Sephirah, *Tifereth*) with "water" (=Aaron, Grace); similarly the expression in the following verse (28): "These are (lit. this is) that Moses and Aaron" suggests the fusion of "water" with "wind".'

R. Eleazar and R. Abba once spent a night in an inn in Lydda. R. Eleazar expounded there the verse: "Know therefore this day and consider it in thine heart (*lebabeka*) that YHVH is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath; there is none else" (Deut. IV, 39), as follows. 'The use of the form *lebabeka* instead of *libbo* suggests a plural, "hearts"; and what Moses meant was this: "If thou desirest to know that YHVH and ELOHIM are one within the other and both are one, consider thine own 'hearts', i.e. thy two inclinations, the good and the evil, which are fused one with the other and form a unity".' He also said that sinners impair the supernal world by causing a separation between the "Right" and the "Left". They really cause harm only to themselves, as it is written, "He (Israel) hath corrupted

himself (*lo*) that they are not (*lo*) his children; it is *their* blemish" (Deut. XXXII, 5). "*Lo*" (himself), and "*lo*" (not), in this verse suggest that they both cause and cause not: they cause, i.e. prevent the descent of blessings from above, as it is written: "and then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you and he shut up the heaven that there be no rain" (Deut. XI, 17); and they cause not, as the heaven keeps the blessings to itself. Thus the sinners' separation of the good inclination from the evil one by consciously cleaving to evil separates, as it were, the divine attribute of Grace from that of Judgement, the Right from the Left. Consider the tribes: Judah [274] emanated from the Left and clave to the Right, in order to conquer nations and that his hand might be "in the neck of his enemies" (Gen. XLIX, 8). Had he not clung to the Right, he would not have broken down their armies. But does not the Left awaken Judgement? The truth is that when He judges Israel He pushes them away from Him with His "Left Hand" but brings them near to Him with His "Right Hand", but with the Gentiles it is just the opposite, as it is written, "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy" (Ex. XV, 6). Therefore Judah, who is of the Left, clave to the Right, and the other tribes of his company (v. Numbers II) also clung to the Right; Issachar, who devoted himself to study of the Torah, which comes from the Right (Deut. XXXIII, 2: "from his right hand went a fiery law for them"), and Zebulun, who supported Issachar in his studies by supplying his material needs (cf. Gen. 2416), also clave to the Right. Therefore Judah effected a double union: north with water, left with right. Reuben, who sinned towards his father, started with the Right, joined the Left and clave to it, therefore all who belonged to his company were of the Left, viz. Simeon, symbolized by an ox (cf. Gen. XLIX, 6), of which it says: "The face of an ox on the left" (Ezek. I, 10), and Gad, who represents the left thigh (v. Zohar, Gen. 2416). Here the south was fused with fire, right with left. Thus this is the meaning of the words, "Know therefore this day, etc.", to unite the Right with the Left and so to "know that YHVH is ELOHIM". Said R. Abba: 'Most assuredly so! "This

Aaron and Moses"—"this Moses and Aaron"; wind fused with water, water with wind.' R. Abba expounded in a similar way the verse: "Thou shalt love YHVH thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength" (Deut. VI, 5). 'The holy unification', he said, 'is intimated here, and an earnest appeal is made to man to declare the unity of the Holy Name with a supreme love; viz. "with all thy heart" (*lebabka*, as above), i.e. with the right and the left, with the good and the evil inclinations; "and with all thy soul", with the soul of David, which is placed between them; "and with all thy strength", i.e. to unite in mind the two Names (YHVH and ELOHIM) in the transcendental sphere which passes all understanding. This is a perfect unification through the true love of God. Jacob, the unifier of sides (attributes), represents symbolically this love. This is the esoteric significance of the singular pronoun used in connection with Moses and Aaron: the two attributes which they represent are both fused into one, and there is no separation between them.' R. Judah found an example of the same thing in King David, who said of himself: "O, how I love thy Torah! It is my meditation all the day" (Ps. CIX, 97); "At midnight I rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgements" (*Ibid.* V, 62). David guided his people like a shepherd so that they should not turn from the way of truth. During the day he studied the Law, in order to perfect himself in it, and at night he sang praises to the Holy One, blessed be He, until the morning, which he awakened, as he said: "Awake, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp; I wake up the morning." During the day he sought to administer justice in order to fuse the Left with the Right, and during the night he (sang praises) in order to make night also as it were a part of day. And observe that King David in his time brought all those "living creatures of the field" (Ps. CIV, 11) near the ocean, but as soon as Solomon obtained sway the ocean heaved up in its fulness and watered them. Which of them were the first to be given drink? It has already been stated that it was the huge supernal fishes, regarding which it is written, "and fill the waters in the seas" (Gen. I, 22). Said R. [27b] Eleazar:

"Thirteen springs[1] emerge in the upper world, on the right side, which give rise to thirteen deep streams. Of these streams, whilst some are rising others are falling, and their waters mingle with each other. These thirteen streams, issuing from thirteen springs, branch out besides into a thousand rivers, flowing in all directions, namely, four hundred and ninety-nine and a half to the one side, and four hundred and ninety-nine and a half to the other side, the remaining two half rivers being joined into one and metamorphosed into a Serpent, whose head is red as the rose, and whose scales are solid as iron, and who has fins by means of which he propels himself through all the rivers. When he raises his tail he strikes against all fishes coming in his way so that none of them dare stand in his path. His mouth emits a flaming fire. When he sets out to traverse the rivers, all the fishes fall a-trembling, take flight and precipitate themselves into the great ocean. Once every seventy years he crouches on the one side and once every seventy on the other side; the thousand rivers less one are thus filled with him. So he remains for a time; but when he bestirs himself there issues from him a strip of fire in his scales, which stand out and quiver, and the waters of the rivers become turbid and assume a dark-blue colour, and waves surge in every direction. He then lifts his tail and lashes with it upwards and downwards, so that everything flees before him; until finally a flame of fire is projected from the North and a proclamation goes forth, saying: "Arise, ye old females,[2] be scattered into all the four corners, for, behold, there is awakened the one who is about to put fetters on the jaws of the monster." So Scripture says: "And I will put hooks in thy jaws", etc. (Ezek. XXIX, 4). Then they all scatter, and the monster is seized and pierced through his jaws and thrust into the cavern of the great abyss, so that his power is broken. After that he is brought back to his rivers. This performance is

[1] These are supposed to symbolize the forces of judgement which issue from the Sefirah Malkuth.

[2] Alluding to Lilith, the night-demon, and her female retinue. According to the commentators, there is, besides old Lilith, also young Lilith, who is at the service of Asmodeus.

repeated every seventy years in order to prevent him from doing damage to the heavenly regions and their foundations. For this we all give thanks and offer up praise, as it is written: "O come, let us bow down and bend the knee; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker" (Ps. XCV, 6). The superior dragons abide on high, to wit, those that were blessed, as we read: "And God blessed them" (Gen. I, 22). These rule over all the other fishes, of whom it is written, "and fill the waters in the seas" (*Ibid.*) Concerning this it is written: "How manifold are thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast thou made them all" (Ps. CIV, 24).' [28a]

SAY UNTO AARON, TAKE THY ROD. Why Aaron's rod, and not that of Moses? Because Moses' rod was more sacred, as in the upper Paradise the Holy Name had been engraved on it, and it was not the desire of the Holy One that it should be defiled by coming into contact with the rods of the Egyptian magicians. There was, however, yet another reason, namely, that all those (impure) powers that come from the Left might be subdued by Aaron, whose grade is that of the Right. R. Hiya asked R. Jose: 'As the Holy One knew that the Egyptian magicians were able to turn their rods into serpents, why did He command Moses and Aaron to perform this sign before Pharaoh? There was nothing wonderful in this to him.' R. Jose replied: 'Pharaoh's dominion originated with the Serpent, and therefore his punishment commenced with the serpent. When the magicians saw it they rejoiced because they knew that they could do the same, but then Aaron's serpent turned into a dry rod again, as it says, "and Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods" (v. 12). Then they were astonished, realizing that there was a superior Power on earth. Thus Aaron showed in fact a double sign, one above and one below: one above, by showing to Pharaoh that there was a higher Serpent which ruled over theirs, and one below by making wood subdue their serpents. Do not think that the magicians' performance was mere make-believe: their rods actually did "become serpents" (*Ibid.*). It is written: "Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon (*tanin*)

that lies in the midst of his rivers" (Ezek. XXIX, 4). It is from there that the Egyptian magicians derived their power of witchcraft, but the source of their wisdom was the lowest of all grades.' Observe that their wisdom consisted in subjecting the lowest grades to higher grades, the chiefs of their dominion. These in turn derive their power from the Dragon underneath whom they are situated, as is indicated by the phrase, "who is behind the mill" (Ex. XI, 5).

R. Hiya was sitting one day by the gate of Usha when he saw a bird flying behind R. Eleazar. He said to him: 'It looks as if even when you walk in the streets everyone wants to follow you!' R. Eleazar turned his head and saw the bird, and then he said: 'It must have some message for me. The Holy One has many messengers, and not living creatures only, "For the stone crieth out of the wall and the beam out of the timber answereth it" (Hab. II, 11). How careful, therefore, should a man be not to sin before the Holy One, blessed be He, in secret, imagining that no one can testify against him: the stones and stocks of a man's own house shall cry out against him. Aaron's rod was a piece of dry wood, and yet the Holy One used it for His first sign in Egypt, performing through it two miracles: it swallowed up their serpents, and for a time was turned into a living being. Curse [28b] on those who say that the Holy One will not raise the dead, because it seems to them an impossibility! Let those fools who are far from the Torah and from the Holy One think a little. Aaron had in his hand a rod made of dry wood, the Holy One turned it to be a living creature for a short time, with spirit and body; can He not also, then, at the time when He will gladden the world, turn into a new creation those bodies which once had spirits and holy souls in them, who kept the commandments and studied the Law day and night, and which He had hidden for a time in the earth?' Said R. Hiya: 'And what is more, from the words, "Thy dead ones will live" (Isa. XXVI, 19), it is evident that not only will there be a new creation, but that the very bodies which were dead will rise, for one bone in the body remains intact, not decaying in the earth, and on the Resurrection Day the Holy One will soften it and make it like leaven in

dough, and it will rise and expand on all sides, and the whole body and all its members will be formed from it, and then the Holy One will put spirit into it.' Said R. Eleazar: 'Assuredly so. And the bone will be softened by the dew, as it says: "Thy dead ones shall live . . . for thy dew is the dew of plants" (*Ibid.*).'

TAKE THY ROD AND STRETCH OUT THY HAND UPON THE WATERS OF EGYPT, UPON THEIR STREAMS, UPON THEIR RIVERS . . . THAT THEY MAY BECOME BLOOD. Said R. Judah: 'How was this possible? Could one rod so be stretched over all this extent? Moreover, it says later, "And seven days were fulfilled after the Lord had smitten the river" (v. 25), only mentioning the river, and leaving out the other waters of Egypt upon which Aaron had stretched out his hand. The explanation is that the reference is to the River Nile, for out of this all the other rivers, streams, ponds, and pools are filled, so that Aaron needed but to smite that river and all the other waters were smitten. The proof is that it says, "And the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the *river*" (v. 21).' R. Abba said: 'Observe that the lower waters diverge and spread on every side, but the upper waters draw together and are concentrated in one place,[1] as it says: "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place" (Gen. I, 9); and again, "And the gathering together of the waters called He seas"—as we have explained. The firmament in which the sun, the moon, the stars, and the plants are suspended is the great meeting place where the upper waters are gathered, and whence the earth, or lower world, is watered. She thereupon scatters and distributes these waters far and wide, in order that all things may be watered by them. When, however, chastisement impends over the world, then the lower world does not imbibe from that upper firmament of sun and moon, but from the "left side", concerning which it says: "The sword of the Lord is full of blood" (Isa. XXXIV, 6). Woe unto them who must drink from this cup! At such times the sea imbibes from both sides and divides itself into two

[1] *Yesod.*

parts, white and red (mercy and justice). Thus it was the lot of Egypt which was cast into the Nile, and the blow was inflicted both above and below. Therefore Israel drank water, but the Egyptians blood. [29a]

'Observe that when the Holy One, blessed be He, prepares to inflict chastisement upon the idolatrous nations, the "Left Side" awakens and changes the whiteness of the moon to blood; then the ponds and the pools below are also filled with blood. So the punishment of the unrighteous is indeed blood. Further, when the doom of blood impends upon a people, it is the blood of slaughter executed by another people whom God brings against them. But against Egypt the Holy One, blessed be He, did not choose to raise up another nation, lest Israel, who dwelt in her midst, might also suffer. Therefore He punished the Egyptians by causing their streams to be changed into blood so that they could not drink from them. And as Egypt's supramundane power was centred in the Nile, the Holy One enforced His will first on that principality, so that—the Nile being one of their divinities—their highest power might first of all be humbled. From the lesser idols also blood gushed out, as it is written: "And there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone" (*Ibid.*).'

R. Hiya arose one night to study the Torah, R. Jose the lesser, who was still a youth, being with him. R. Hiya began by quoting: "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works" (Eccles. IX, 7). He said: 'What made Solomon say this? Truly, all Solomon's words were uttered in wisdom, and when a man walks in the way of the Holy One, He draws near to him and gives him peace and rest, so that he enjoys his bread and his wine, the Holy One being well pleased with him and his work.' Then said the young man: 'If this is all that the words mean, where is their great wisdom?' R. Hiya replied: 'My son, cook thy meat well[1] and thou wilt understand.' Said the youth: 'Even without cooking[2] I understood the meaning thereof.' Said R. Hiya: 'How so?' He replied: 'I have once heard from my father that in this verse Solomon

[1] Al. "When thou comest to ripeness." [2] Al. "Even before I ripen."

admonishes man to crown the Community of Israel with joy, which is the "Right Side", represented by bread, and then with wine, which is the "Left Side", in order that she may be firm in faith, since complete and perfect joy is in the union of "Right" and "Left"; and when she is between the two the world is full of blessing, bounty, righteousness, and grace. And all this is accomplished when the Holy One, blessed be He, is satisfied with the works of the children of men.' R. Ḥiya then went up to him, kissed him, and said: 'Assuredly, I had intended to say this, but purposely left it to thee;[1] and now I perceive that the Holy One desires to crown thee with the Torah.'

R. Ḥiya then went on to expound the verse: SAY UNTO AARON, TAKE THY ROD, AND STRETCH OUT THY HAND OVER THE WATERS OF EGYPT. 'Why Aaron rather than Moses?' he asked. 'Because the Holy One, blessed be He, said: Aaron represents the principle of water, and the Left Side is eager to draw the waters for himself. It is thus befitting that Aaron, who himself emanates from that side, should stir it up to take possession of the waters, whereby they will turn into blood. Observe that the lowest of the grades was first smitten.' Said R. Simeon: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, began with the lowest grade, smiting each one in succession with every finger of His hand; and when He reached the highest He Himself passed through Egypt and slew all the firstborn of the land, as the firstborn represented the highest and choicest grade of all. Observe, further, that Pharaoh was the ruler of the waters, as it is written of him: "the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers" (Ezek. XXIX, 3). For that reason the turning of his river into blood was the first plague. Then followed the frogs, who with mighty squealings and croakings entered the very entrails of the Egyptians. They emerged from the river on to the dry land, where they raised a noise all around until they fell dead in the interior of the houses. Esoterically speaking, the ten plagues were wrought by the mighty hand of the Almighty, by the hand that overpowered the grades [29b] of the Egyptian divinities, and confused their minds so that they

[1] Al. "on account of thee", i.e. thinking thee too young.

remained helpless. Observe that all their grades, as soon as they emerged into the open to accomplish something that could be seen by all, became powerless to do anything. This was due to the mighty hand which pressed on them.'

AND THE RIVER SHALL SWARM WITH FROGS, WHICH SHALL GO UP AND COME INTO THINE HOUSE. R. Simeon quoted here the verse: "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, because they were not" (Jer. XXXI, 15). 'The Community of Israel is called "Rachel", as it says, "As a sheep (*raḥel*) before her shearers is dumb" (Isa. LIII, 7). Why dumb? Because when other nations rule over her the voice departs from her and she becomes dumb. "Ramah" (lit. high) refers to the Jerusalem which is above. "Rachel weeping for her children": as long as Israel is in exile, Rachel weeps, for she is their Mother. "She refuseth to be comforted over her children for he (singular) is not": it ought to be "*they are* not" (*enam*); why is the singular used? Because it refers to Israel's Spouse (God), who is her "Voice", and has departed from her and they live in separation. It was not once only that Rachel wept over Israel, but whenever they are in exile she weeps over them so. Because of this the Holy One gave the Egyptians another kind of "voice", in the croaking of the frogs, who made a noise in their insides.'

THEY SHALL COME INTO THY HOUSE AND THY SLEEPING-CHAMBER AND THY BED. The bed here is mentioned only in connection with Pharaoh, not with his servants and people. The reason is this. It is written concerning Sarah: "The princes of Pharaoh saw her and commended her before Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house" (Gen. XII, 15). The threefold repetition of "Pharaoh" [30a] in this verse corresponds to the three Pharaohs, one in the time of Sarah, one in the time of Joseph, and one whom Moses punished with his rod. The first Pharaoh, seeing that Sarah was a beautiful woman, commanded his artists to make a likeness of her. They painted her picture on one of the walls of his bed-chamber, but he was not satisfied until

they made a picture of her on wood, which he took with him to bed. Each successive Pharaoh used similarly to feast his eyes on that picture. For that reason Pharaoh was punished more severely than his subjects; the frogs entering even into his bed. R. Abba said: 'Israel praise God day and night, and in response the Holy One, blessed be He, remembered them in Egypt and brought against Pharaoh creatures that remain still neither day nor night, to wit, the frogs, whose sounds never cease, in punishment for his having made heavy the burden of the holy people, who cease not day or night to chant praises to the Holy One, blessed be He. Through the croakings of the frogs no one in Egypt could converse with his neighbour; through them the very soil became polluted, and babes and young children died from their chatter. Why, it may be asked, were the Egyptians not able to slay them? The explanation is that for every one an Egyptian attempted to kill with a stick or a stone, six came forth out of its belly, running hither and thither, so that people refrained from touching them. Observe that ever so many streams and rivers rise out of the Supernal Sea, which in their courses [306] divide and subdivide again into many other rivers and streams; and the portion that fell to the side of Egypt were waters swarming with such creatures. For all waters issuing from that sea breed various kinds of fishes, to wit, messengers sent into the world to carry out the will of their Master through the spirit of Wisdom. In regard to this a traditional text tells us that there are waters that breed wise men and other waters that breed foolish men, according to the various rivers that branch off into all sides. Now the Egyptian rivers breed masters of sorcery of various kinds, and of ten degrees, as enumerated in the verse, "one that useth divination, a soothsayer, or a charmer, or one that consulteth a ghost or a familiar spirit, or a necromancer" (Deut. XVIII, 10-11). Here we have ten species of sorcery. And at that time the Holy One, blessed be He, stretched forth His finger and disturbed the brooks and rivers of Egypt so that their fishes of wisdom were confounded: some waters turned into blood, others threw up small fishes of no account upon whom the spirit of sorcery never rested.

Then there came upon them the plague called *'arob* (lit. mixture, i.e. mixture of various beasts) which allegorically indicates that the Almighty confounded their magical arts so that their practitioners were not able to piece them together. Moreover, that confusion produced a mingling of a perverse and hybrid kind similar to those referred to in the words of Scripture, "thou shalt not sow thy field with two kinds of seed; neither shall there come upon thee a garment of two kinds of stuff mingled together" (Lev. XIX, 19). Many were then the legions that bestirred themselves above, but the Holy One, blessed be He, confounded them altogether; these mighty deeds which the Almighty performed in Egypt were accomplished by the raising of one of his hands against them, both on high and below. It was then that the wisdom of Egypt perished, as Scripture says: "and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid" (Isa. XXIX, 14). Note further the pronouncement: "And I will confuse Egypt with Egypt" (*Ibid.* XIX, 2), that is to say, celestial Egypt with terrestrial Egypt. For the celestial legions are in charge of the terrestrial ones, and they both were altogether thrown in disorder. They were confused on high so that the Egyptians could not derive inspiration from the celestial sources as formerly. It was with this object that the Almighty brought on them the *'arob*, or mixture and confusion, manifested in a mixed horde of beasts that assailed them; as well as the plague of vermin, engendered from the dust of the earth. Observe that whatever is engendered on earth grows through the stimulus of a celestial Chieftain who has charge over it, and that all on earth is shaped after a celestial pattern. There are on high seven firmaments, and seven zones of earth. Correspondingly, in the lower world there are seven graded firmaments and seven zones of earth. These, as the Companions have expounded, are arranged like the rungs of a ladder, rising one above the other, and each zone has ten divisions, so that there are seventy in all. Each one of these is presided over by a Chieftain, and these seventy Chieftains have under their charge the seventy nations of the earth. These seventy earth-divisions, again, border on

and surround the Holy Land, as Scripture says: "Behold, it is the couch of Solomon; threescore mighty men are about, of the mighty men of Israel" (S.S. III, 7), there being, in addition to the threescore mentioned, ten concealed among their number. All these surround the Holy Land. This alludes to the upper world, and the same is reproduced in the lower world. Now at that time the Holy One, blessed be He, stretched forth His finger over the zone that was allotted to the Egyptians, and a fiery flame passed through the whole tract and dried up all the alluvial soil, with the result that the dust of the earth generated vermin. It was Aaron that smote the dust, in order to show that the right hand of the Holy One, blessed be He, breaks His enemies, as we read: "Thy right hand, O Lord, dasheth in pieces the enemy" (Ex. XV, 6). The same punishment is destined to be meted out by the Holy One, blessed be He, to Rome the great Metropolis, as it is written: "And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone" (Isa. XXXIV, 9). Thus "all the dust of the earth became vermin throughout all the land of Egypt".

R. Judah and R. Ḥiya were once walking together. Said R. Ḥiya: 'When members of the Fellowship [312a] journey together they must be of one heart and mind, and should sinners or persons who have no place in the King's Palace chance to fall in with them, or to be in their company, they must separate from them. They should take example from Caleb, of whom it is written: "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully . . ." (Num. XIV, 24). "Another spirit" signifies that Caleb separated himself from the other spies and went alone to Hebron in order to prostrate himself at the cave of Machpelah before the graves of the patriarchs; and Hebron was allotted to him as his inheritance, as it is written: "To him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon" (Deut. I, 36). And why was Hebron given to him? There is an esoteric reason for this, the same which also underlies David's connection with Hebron. For we find that when Saul died and David enquired of the Lord, "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?", the answer was that he should go up into

Hebron (2 Sam. II, 1). Now, since Saul was dead and David already the rightful king, why did he not at once proclaim his rule over the whole land? Why was it necessary for him to go to Hebron and there become anointed as king over Judah only for seven years, not being declared monarch over the whole of Israel till after the death of Ish-Bosheth? Truly, the Holy One, blessed be His Name, had a deep purpose in this. The holy kingdom could not be fully established without first attaching itself to the patriarchs in Hebron. When that contact was established the kingdom was firmly erected with support from the world above, whose symbol, in David's case, was "seven years", seven being the number of perfection, because it contains all. So when it is said of the Temple, "And he built it seven years", the same perfection is suggested. Now, David desired to build the perfect kingdom here below as a counterpart of the Kingdom above; but before he could achieve his desire he had to acquire power for the task by attaching himself to the patriarchs for "seven" years. Thus only was he enabled to stablish his kingdom in perfection, in the fashion of the Kingdom of supernal light: a kingdom never to be shaken. And, guided by a similar inspiration, Caleb also went to Hebron.'

R. Jose and R. Hezekiah were once going from Cappadocia to Lydda, and with them was a Jew driving a donkey heavily laden. [312b] On their way they arrived at a field where they noticed a number of animals dead and dying. They said: 'Undoubtedly, a cattle plague has broken out in this place.' The Judean then remarked as follows: 'The slaying of the flocks and herds in Egypt was of three kinds. One was through the murrain, one through the hail, and a third was limited to the firstborn. In regard to the first it is written: "Behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thy cattle which are in the field." Whereas previously it is written, "it is the finger of God" (Ex. VIII, 15), here it speaks of "the hand of the Lord", to wit, with all its five fingers, for the reason that five species of cattle were smitten, as enumerated in the passage, "upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the herds, and upon the flocks." They were smitten each one by one of the five fingers, and thus together by the

hand of the Lord. Hence we read, "a very grievous murrain", signifying that the cattle died of themselves, suddenly and without any visible cause. Afterwards, as the Egyptians did not repent, the *DeBeR* (murrain) literally turned about its letters and became *BaRaD* (hail), which killed all those that survived. The different between the two was that the former killed gently, and the latter with violence and with fury. Both, however, struck the same species, and by means of the five fingers.' [32*a*]

R. Jose and R. Hiya were walking together. Said R. Jose to R. Hiya: 'Why art thou silent? Without converse on holy matters the walk is not profitable.' R. Hiya burst into tears and said: 'It is written, "Sarai was barren, she had no child" (Gen. XI, 30). Alas, alas! Alas for the time when Hagar begat Ishmael!' Said R. Jose: 'Why? Did not Sarah afterwards conceive and bear a son of the holy stock?' R. Hiya answered: "Thou seest and I see, but one may see more than another. And I have heard something from the mouth of R. Simeon, which makes me weep.' 'What is it?' 'I will tell you. Sarah was long in having a son of her own, and she said to Abraham: "I pray thee, go in unto my maid" (Gen. XVI, 2), and Hagar had a son by Abram, and Abram prayed to God: "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" Now, although the Holy One, blessed be He, promised Abraham that he would beget Isaac, yet Abraham was so attached to Ishmael, that the Holy One had to promise him: "As for Ishmael, I have heard thee: behold, I have blessed him . . . and I will make him a great nation" (*Ibid.* 20). Through his circumcision Ishmael entered into the holy covenant before Isaac was born. Now, for four hundred years the supramundane representative of Ishmael stood before the Holy One, blessed be He, and pleaded thus with him: "He who is circumcised, has he a portion in Thy Name?" "Yes." "But what then of Ishmael? Is he not circumcised? Why then has he no portion in Thy Name, like Isaac?" The Holy One answered: "Isaac was circumcised according to rule,[1] not so Ishmael; moreover the Israelites attach themselves to me from the eighth day of their birth, but the Ishmaelites for a long time are far

[1] i.e. with the *peri'ah*, or exposure of the flesh.

from me." Said he: "Yet, as Ishmael has been circumcised, he ought to have a reward!" Woe, woe, that Ishmael was born into the world and was circumcised! What did the Holy One do? He banished the children of Ishmael from the heavenly communion and gave them instead a portion here below in the Holy Land, because of their circumcision. And they are destined to rule over the land a long time, so long as it is empty, just as their form of circumcision is empty and imperfect; and they will prevent Israel from returning to their own land until the merit of the children of Ishmael shall have become exhausted. And the sons of Ishmael will fight mighty battles in the world, and the sons of Edom will gather against them, and make war against them, some on land, others on sea, and some close to Jerusalem, and one shall prevail over the other, but the Holy Land will not be delivered to the sons of Edom. Then a nation from the furthest ends of the earth will rise against wicked Rome and fight against her for three months, and many nations will gather there and fall into the hands of that people, until all the sons of Edom will congregate against her from all the ends of the earth. Then the Holy One will rise against them, as it says: "A slaughter of the Lord in Bazrah and a great slaughter in the land of Edom" (Isa. XXXIV, 6). He will "take hold of the ends of the earth that the wicked might be shaken out of it" (Job XXXVIII, 13). He will wipe out the children of Ishmael from the Holy Land, and crush all the powers and principalities of the nations in the supramundane world, and only one power will remain above to rule over the nations of the world, namely the power representing Israel, as it is written: "The Lord is thy shadow at thy right hand" (Ps. CXXI, 5). For the Holy Name is at the Right, and the Torah is at the Right, and therefore all depends on the Right, and likewise the future salvation is at the Right, as it says: "Save with thy right hand" (Ps. LX, 7). Concerning that time it is written: "Then I will turn to the peoples a pure language that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent" (Haggai III, 9), and on that day "will the Lord be one and his name one" (Zech. XIV, 9). Blessed be the Lord for ever and ever. Amen and amen.'

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Ex. x, 1–xiii, 17

AND THE LORD SAID UNTO MOSES, GO IN UNTO PHARAOH, FOR I HAVE HARDENED HIS HEART. R. Judah opened here with the verse: *Blessed is the people that knows the joyful sound; O Lord, they shall walk in the light of thy countenance* (Ps. LXXXIX, 16). He exclaimed: 'How important it is for man to walk in the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He, and keep the commandments of the Torah, that so he may be worthy of the world to come and triumph over all accusations, both on earth and in heaven! For as there are accusers of man here below, so there are also accusers above. But those who keep the commandments of the Torah and walk in righteousness, in fear of their Lord, will never lack intercessors in heaven, for is it not written: "If there be with him an angel-intercessor, one among a thousand . . . then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom" (Job XXXIII, 23–24)?' Said R. Hiya to him: 'Why should man need an angel to intercede for him? Is it not written: "The Lord shall be thy confidence and shall keep thy foot from being taken" (Prov. III, 26); "The Lord shall keep thee from all evil" (Ps. CXXI, 7)? Yea, verily, the Holy One Himself beholdeth all that man does, whether it be good or evil, as it is written: "Can a man hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?" (Jer. XXIII, 24).' R. Judah replied: 'Indeed, thou speakest truth! But it is also written that Satan said: "But put forth thine hand and touch his bone and his flesh", and that the Holy One Himself said to Satan, "And thou movest me against him" (Job II, 3–4); which proves that permission was given to the powers of the "other side" that they might so rise up against man on account of the deeds he had done in this world. And in all this the ways of the Holy One are hidden, and it is beyond me to follow them, for these are the statutes of the Holy One, which men must not examine too closely, save those who

walk in the way of wisdom and so are in truth worthy to penetrate into the veiled paths of the Torah, and to comprehend the hidden truths contains therein.'

R. Eleazar then discoursed on the verse: *And there was a day when the sons of God came to stand before the Lord, and Satan came also among them* (Job I, 6). 'This "day"', said he, 'was New Year's Day, on which the Holy One sits in judgement on the world. "The sons of God" are the supernal beings who are appointed to watch the actions of mankind. The expression "to stand before the Lord" is parallel to the verse, "All the hosts of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left" (1 Kings XXII, 19). But in this verse it has a more special significance, viz. to make manifest the love of the Holy One for Israel. For these messengers who are appointed to watch over the works of men roam hither and thither throughout the world, gathering up the deeds of all creatures so that on New Year's Day, the day of judgement, they may stand before the Lord with their burden of accusations. Yet of all the peoples of the earth, it is only one—Israel—whose works are examined by them carefully and in detail, for the Israelites are the Holy One's children in a particular sense, and when their works are not according to the Divine purpose, they actually weaken the power of the Holy One Himself, but when they do His will they, as it were, increase His power and might—"give strength to God" (Ps. LXVIII, 35). Thus "the sons of God", the supernal messengers, when they "stand" with their accusations against Israel, stand also "against (*'al*) God". "And Satan came also among them." "Also" signifies that [33a] he came with the set purpose of displaying his superior power as the greatest of all the celestial accusers and so making it difficult for Israel to obtain forgiveness. When the Holy One saw that they all came thus to accuse, "He said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? And Satan replied, From going to and fro in the land." Now we know that the control of all lands is entrusted to the supernal Chieftains, save that of the Land of Israel alone. Hence, when the Satan said "*the* land", God knew that he intended to accuse Israel, and therefore straightway asked him: "Hast thou considered my servant

Job, that there is none like him in the earth ? ", in order to divert him to another subject and make him leave Israel alone—like a shepherd who throws a lamb to a wolf in order to save the rest of the flock. Thereupon Satan left Israel and turned his attention to Job, saying: "Doth Job fear God for naught ?", as if to say, "No wonder the servant fears the Master who gives him all that his heart desires ! Remove thy providential care from him and then see what his fear and reverence will be worth !" Mark this ! When in the hour of need something is thrown as a sop to the "other side"—like the lamb thrown to the wolf—the representative of the "other side" soon ceases to attack its original victim. This is the reason for the offering of a goat at the New Moon and on the Day of Atonement; for Satan occupies himself with these and leaves Israel in peace. Now the time had come for the "other side" to have its due from the whole seed of Abraham. For Satan had a case against Abraham for having brought as a sacrifice an animal instead of Isaac—an unlawful transaction, since it says, "he shall not alter it (an animal destined for sacrifice) nor change it" (Lev. XXVII, 10). His claim, therefore, was quite reasonable. Thus, from the time when Isaac was saved and an animal substituted for him as a sacrifice, the Holy One, blessed be He, apportioned unto Satan another branch of Abraham's family that he might accuse it, namely the (heathen) descendants of his brother Nahor, the family of Uz (and Job was from the land of Uz). Now Job was one of the closest counsellors of Pharaoh, and when the latter formed the intention of exterminating the children of Israel, Job advised him: "Do not kill them, but take their possessions from them and subject their bodies to severe toil." Then said the Holy One: "As thou livest, thou shalt be judged according to thine own judgements !" Therefore, when Satan said, "But put forth thine hand now and touch all that he has and touch his bone and his flesh" (v. 11), the Lord placed in his power all Job's possessions and his flesh, only bidding him to "save his soul " (v. 12)—that is, his life. It is true, the text says, "And thou movedst me against him to destroy him without cause" (Job. II, 3), which would seem to show that Job's sufferings were undeserved.

We should, however, translate not "*against* him" (*bo*), but "*in* him", i.e. in his opinion, this being only Job's own idea, not the real fact.' [33b] R. Abba here interposed, saying: 'All that is correct to a point, but we have been taught that Satan, the "old but foolish king" (Eccl. IV, 13), has the right to accuse only individuals, not humanity as a whole; for the judgement of the world is executed by the Holy One Himself, as it says concerning those who built the Tower of Babel: "And *the Lord* came down to see" (Gen. XI, 5); also in connection with Sodom and Gomorra: "*I* will go down now and see" (*Ibid.* XVIII, 21); for the Holy One would not rest satisfied to condemn the world to perdition merely on the strength of the word of Satan, who is the great accuser and whose only desire is to destroy the world. The truth is, however, that on New Year's Day two "sides" stand before the Holy One, blessed be He, for the reception of mankind. Those men of whom good deeds and repentance can be recorded are privileged to be inscribed in the roll of that side which is life and which brings forth life, and whoever is on its side is inscribed for life; but those whose works are evil are assigned to the other side, which is death. Sometimes, however, it happens that the world is, as it were, exactly balanced between the two. Then if there is but one righteous person to turn the scale, the world is saved; but if one wicked, then the whole world is condemned to death. And in just such a condition were the affairs of men in the time of Job, when the Accuser "stood before the Lord", eager to denounce the world. Straightway the Holy One asked him: "Hast thou considered my servant Job ?" And as soon as Satan heard this name, he concentrated all his attention upon him. For this reason we are taught that it is wrong to isolate oneself and be separated from the corporate community, since one is then liable to be singled out and accused in the upper realm. Therefore the Shunammite woman said, "I dwell among my people" (2 Kings IV, 13), meaning that she had no desire to separate herself from the majority, having dwelt hitherto among her people and being known above merely as one with them. Job, however, was known apart from his people: he was singled out; and this was

Satan's opportunity. Said he: "Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast not thou made an hedge about him and about his house? . . ." (Job 1, 9–10), meaning, "Take away all the good things with which thou hast endowed him, and he will curse thee to thy face (v. 11): he will leave thee and become attached to the 'other side'. At present he eats thy bread; take that away and we shall soon see of what stuff he is made and to whom he will cleave!" Whereupon "the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy hand" (v. 12). Thus permission was given to the Satan to persecute Job and to show that his motives were not really pure; for as soon as he was tried he left the right way and did not remain steadfast: "He did not sin with his lips" (II, 10), but he did sin in his mind, and later also in his speech. He did not, however, go so far as to attach himself to the "other side", as Satan had predicted. His trials lasted twelve months, for this is the space of time allotted to the "other side", as, according to tradition, sinners are judged in Gehenna for twelve months. And because Job did not attach himself to the "other side", "the Lord blessed the [34a] latter end of Job more than his beginning" (XLII, 12).

R. Simeon said: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, did not tempt Job in the same way as He tempted other righteous men; it does not say concerning him, as it says concerning Abraham (Gen. XXII, 1), that *God* tempted him. Abraham led with his own hands his only begotten son to be sacrificed to the Holy One, but Job gave nothing to Him. Indeed, he was not bidden to do anything of the kind, as God knew that he would not be equal to the trial. He was merely delivered to the Accuser, and the Holy One spurred Satan, through the medium of the attribute of Justice, to test him, as it says: "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" . . .'

Said R. Simeon: 'It is written concerning Cain that he brought a sacrifice "at the end of days" (Gen. IV, 8), and we have laid down that this expression indicates the "other side" (v. Zohar, Gen. 62*b*). And of Abel it says that "he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof" (*Ibid.* 4). The expression "he also" (*gam hu*) suggests that, unlike Cain, he brought his offering primarily to the Holy

One, and spared only "the fat thereof" to the "other side"; whereas Cain offered primarily to the "other side", and gave only a part to the Holy One, and therefore his sacrifice was not accepted. Now we read in regard to Job that "his sons went and feasted . . . and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them" (Job 1, 4). While they thus feasted and made merry the Accuser was daily present in their midst, but he could not prevail against them, as it is written: "Hast not thou made an hedge about him and about his house?" And when Job made sacrifices, he did not give Satan any part whatsoever, for it says, "He offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all" (*Ibid.* 5), this being an offering which ascends (*'olah*) entirely on high, so that he gave no portion to the "other side". Had he done so, the Accuser would not have been able to prevail against him. Hence in the end he only took what was his due. As to the question which might be asked, why then did God allow Job to suffer thus, the answer would be that, had he given Satan his due, the "unholy side" would have separated itself from the holy, and so allowed the latter to ascend undisturbed into the highest spheres; but since he did not do so, the Holy One let justice be executed on him. Mark this! As Job kept evil separate from good and failed to fuse them, he was judged accordingly: first he experienced good, then what was evil, then again good. For man should be cognizant of both good and evil, and turn evil itself into good. This is a deep tenet of faith.'

R. Simeon continued: 'It is now fitting to reveal mysteries connected with that which is above and that which is below. Why is it written here, "Come (*bo*) unto Pharaoh"? Ought it not rather to have said "go" (*lekh*)? It is to indicate that the Holy One, blessed be He, guided Moses through a labyrinth right into the abode of a certain supernal mighty dragon—that is to say, Egypt's celestial representative—from whom many lesser dragons emanate. Moses was afraid to approach him, because his roots are in supernal regions, and he only approached his subsidiary streams. When the Holy One saw that Moses feared the dragon, and that none of the supernal messengers was able to overcome him, He

proclaimed: "Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon (*tanim*) that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said: My river is my own, and I have made it for myself" (Ezek. XXIX, 3). Yea, truly, the Lord Himself had to war against this dragon, and no lesser being. This is the mystery of the "great dragon" for those who are familiar with the esoteric lore.' Said R. Simeon further: 'It is written: "And God created the great dragons (*taninim*) and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind" (Gen. I, 21). This verse', he said, 'we have already discussed, but the words "He created the great dragons" contain a yet more special and particular mystery: they refer [34b] to the Leviathan and his mate, which last was slain and is preserved by the Holy One for the regaling of the righteous (in the days of the Messiah). The great dragon reposes between nine rivers, the waters of which are turbulent; and there is a tenth river whose waters are calm, and into the depth of which the blessings of the waters of Paradise descend three times a year. Into this river the dragon enters, making there his habitation; and thence he sallies forth and swims down to the sea, and devours there fish of all kinds, and then returns again to the river. The nine swift rivers are banked by trees and fringed with flowers. The parent river issued from the Left Side and from it three drops fell into a certain channel, and each of the three was divided again into three, and every drop became a river. These are the nine rivers which flow through all the firmaments. And from the final moisture that remained when all the drops had issued forth yet another drop was formed, which issued gently, and of this drop was formed that tenth river, which flows calmly. Into this river also flows a drop from the blessings poured forth from the Right side by the "perennially flowing stream", and it is greater than all the rest. When the four rivers which flow out of the Garden of Eden divide, the one called Pison flows into and is fused with the calm tenth river of which we have spoken. Out of the calm river, thus augmented, are fed and filled all the other rivers; in each of which a dragon dwells, so that the number of the dragons is nine. And each of these

nine has a hole in his head, and the great dragon as well, because each of them emits breath upwards and not downwards. It is written: "In the beginning God *created* . . ." and also "And God *created* the great dragons". This indicates that all the ten acts of Creation had their counterpart in these ten rivers, on each of which one of the dragons breathes heavily. Now, that great dragon, when he raises his fins, heaves up the waters around him, and all the earth is shaken and all the lesser dragons, and this takes place every seventy years.' Said R. Simeon: 'Verily, though the members of the Fellowship are students of the story of Creation, having knowledge of its wonders and perception of the paths of the Holy One, blessed be He, yet even among them there are few who know how to interpret it in connection with the mystery of the great dragon."[1] [35b]

FOR THE LORD WILL PASS THROUGH . . . . R. Jose commented on the expression, "The Lord shall see the blood . . . and pass over". 'Does God then', he said, 'require a sign? Are not all secrets revealed to Him? The explanation, however, is that only when a thought—be it good or evil—is translated into action, does it bring about its due result above, whether for reward or punishment, saving only the intention of idolatry, of which it says, "Take heed to yourselves that your *heart* be not deceived" (Deut. XI, 16).' As to the significance of the hyssop, R. Jose explained that all the streets and market-places of the Egyptians were filled with idols, and all their houses with implements of magic to link them with lower "crowns", and therefore it was necessary to purge the doors with the hyssop, in order that these powers might be exorcised; and this was done in three places, namely upon the lintel and the two side-posts. THEREFORE THE LORD WILL PASS OVER THE DOOR AND WILL NOT SUFFER THE DESTROYER TO COME IN UNTO YOUR HOUSES, because he will see the design of His Holy Name upon the door. Said R. Judah: 'But if so, why was blood only required, seeing that, as we have been taught, the

[1] Here follows, in the original, an elaboration of the same theme belonging to a later section ("The Book of Concealed Mystery").

divine attributes are symbolized by three colours, white, red, and a colour which is between the two and combines both ?' R. Jose replied: 'The blood was of two kinds, that of circumcision and that of the Passover lamb, the former symbolizing mercy and the latter justice.' 'Not so,' rejoined R. Judah. 'It is even as we have been taught, that the Holy One made the blood a symbol of mercy, as if there were white in it, and therefore it says: "And when I passed by thee and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee: In thy blood live" (Ezek. XVI, 6). To this end was the door smeared with blood in three places, viz. on two sides and in the middle.' R. Hezekiah, however, held that two kinds of blood appeared on the doors to represent the two "crowns" which were manifested at that moment in the regions above. R. Jose maintained that it was one crown consisting of two sides blended, [36a] viz. mercy and justice. Said R. Abba: 'In how many ways does the Holy One show His lovingkindness to His people ! A man builds a house; says the Holy One to him: "Write My Name and put it upon thy door (*mezuzah*), and thou wilt sit inside thy house and I will sit outside thy door and protect thee !" And here, in connection with the Passover, He says: "You inscribe on your doors the sign of the mystery of My Faith and I shall protect you from the outside !" They inscribed the likeness of the Holy Name in the form of the letter *Hé*. As the Holy Name was then turned from Mercy to Judgement, chastisement came into (God's) view at that time. Everything was turned into red, as a symbol of vengeance on Israel's enemy. Esoterically speaking, it is fitting to show below the colour corresponding to the state above, whether mercy or judgement. And as it was then even so shall it be in the future, as it says: "Who is this that cometh from Edom (=Rome), with dyed garments from Bozra ?" (Isa. LXIII, 1); for He will clothe Himself entirely in judgement to avenge His people.'

AND NONE OF YOU SHALL GO OUT AT THE DOOR. . . . The reason is found in the dictum of R. Isaac, that, when punishment impends over a place a man should not go out into the open, since, once the Destroyer is given leave, he does harm indiscriminately, and makes no distinction between the righteous and the unrighteous; therefore the people of God should hide themselves lest they be consumed in that vengeance which is the due of the Destroyer. R. Jose said that the same power which exercised judgement on the Egyptians was the agent of mercy to Israel, as it is written: "When I see the blood I will pass over you" (v. 13). For, as we have been taught, all the holy crowns above contain at one and the same time both judgement and mercy. R. Hezekiah drew the same inference from the verse, "And the Lord shall smite Egypt, smiting and healing" (Isa. XIX, 22), i.e. smiting the Egyptians and healing Israel, to wit, from the wound of circumcision, the phrase "the Lord will pass over the door" suggesting the "door" of the body, which is the place of circumcision. R. Simeon interpreted it in a similar way: at the moment when the night was divided and the Holy Crown (the Sefirah *Kether*) was moved to unite with the masculine principle which is the supernal Grace—for they never manifest themselves one without the other—one smote and the other healed. Also, "the Lord passed over the door": that door which is the opening of spirit and body. That circumcision is of such significance can be seen from Abraham: before he was circumcised he was, as it were, a closed vessel, impervious on all sides, but when he was circumcised, and the sign of the letter *yod* of the Holy Name was manifested in him, he became open to supernal influences, this being the inner meaning of the words, "he sat at the door of the tent in the heat of the day" (Gen. XVIII, 1), i.e. of the supernal holy Tent. R. Eleazar said that when the *yod* was manifested he received the glad tidings that Grace was confirmed with Righteousness. R. Abba said it refers to the tenth crown (that of Grace), with which he was then endowed, as indicated by the words "in the heat of the day", namely at the time when Grace predominates. According to another explanation, [36b] the word "pass" here signifies that God passed over the pleadings of the lower crowns, which were connected with certain celestial crowns, and loosened them from their foundations, and did constraint to Himself in order to execute judgement on them and to guard Israel.

And so whenever the word "pass" is used of the Almighty, it means "constraining or forcing Himself", whether to exercise mercy or severity.[1]

AND IT CAME TO PASS THAT AT MIDNIGHT THE LORD SMOTE ALL THE FIRSTBORN IN THE LAND OF EGYPT. R. Hiya and R. Jose were once journeying from Usha to Lydda, the former mounted on an ass. Said R. Jose: 'Let us pause awhile and pray, for the time of the afternoon prayer is at hand and we have been taught particularly never to neglect this prayer. Why so? Because severity is then dominant, and therefore a man should pay special heed to this prayer.' R. Hiya descended and they recited their prayers, after which they continued on their way. As they journeyed, evening drew on, and they saw that the sun was setting. Said R. Hiya: 'Why art thou silent?' R. Jose replied: 'I was reflecting that the condition of mankind depends entirely on their leaders: when these are worthy, the world and all in it prosper, but when they are unworthy, woe to the world and woe to the people!' Said R. Hiya: 'Indeed thou speakest the truth, for it is written, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills as sheep that have not a shepherd, and the Lord said, These have no master; let them return every man to his house in peace" (1 Kings XXII, 17). Instead of "let them *return* to" (*yashubu*) we should expect the text to say "let them stay in" (*yeshbu be-*) their houses, since they had as yet not left them! The explanation is that, as we have been taught, when the head (in this case, the king of Israel) is unworthy, the people are punished for his guilt, as David expressed it: "Lo, I have sinned . . . but these sheep what have they done?" (2 Sam. XXIV, 17); but as "these have no master (because Ahab was punished for his disobedience and killed in the battle) let them return . . . in peace". Thus, when the head of the people is punished, the people escape punishment, for then the attribute of Justice can claim no power over them (having already been appeased). And

1 This explanation is based on the use in Talmudic Hebrew of the expression "*'abar'al middothav*" (lit. passed beyond his usual qualities), to mean "forcing or constraining oneself".

Jehoshaphat also would have been punished for joining Ahab had he not "cried out" (1 Kings XXII, 32).'

As they thus proceeded on their journey, night came on. They said: 'What shall we do? Should we go on we shall be lost in the darkness, and to stay here may be dangerous.' So they turned off the road a little way, and sat down under a tree, keeping themselves awake by conversing on Scriptural subjects. At midnight they heard a sound, and lo, a hind passed by, crying loudly. R. Hiya and R. Jose started up, trembling. Then they heard a voice, proclaiming in a loud tone: 'Ye who are awake, arise! Ye who are sleeping, wake! Ye worlds prepare to meet your Lord.' Said R. Hiya: 'It must now be just midnight, and this is the voice that "maketh the hinds to travail" (*Ibid.*). The esoteric significance of it is as follows. At the hour when the Lord thus shows Himself in the Garden, all the Garden assembles and keeps close to Eden, from whence the stream of life flows forth into numerous channels. The Garden is called "the Bundle of Life", and in it the pious are beatified with the light of the world to come. And at the hour when the Holy One, blessed be He, reveals Himself to these saints, a voice is heard, crying: "Awake, O north wind, come, O thou south, blow upon my garden, may its spices flow out. Let my beloved into his garden come, his pleasant fruit to eat" (S.S. IV, 16). The "pleasant fruit" signifies the sacrifices which are offered to the Holy One out of the soul-essence of the righteous. These offerings take place at midnight.'

After R. Hiya had spoken thus, he and R. Jose sat down. Said R. Jose: 'It has often seemed strange to me that the smiting of the Egyptian firstborn took place at midnight instead of by day, when its wonder would have been manifest to all; also that the firstborn of the "captives in the dungeon and the firstborn of the cattle" (Ex. XII, 29) died, and not the kings, princes, and warriors, as in the case of Sanherib, of whom it is written, "And the angel of the Lord slew in the camp of Assyria, etc." (2 Kings XIX, 35). On that occasion, tradition tells us, the whole camp consisted of kings, princes, and mighty men of war, so that one angel there must have shown [37a] more power than was shown here by God

Himself.' Said R. Hiya: 'This is a good question, which I am unable to answer. However, I have heard that R. Simeon ben Yochai is at present "purifying the streets of Tiberias" (cf. Midrash, Gen. R. 170a), therefore let us go to him.' They remained beneath the tree until the morning, and then set forth. When they reached the place where R. Simeon was, they found him sitting deep in study, with an Haggadic book in his hand. He was commenting on the verse: "All nations are before Him as nothing and they are counted to him as less than nothing" (Isa. XL, 17). 'The word "nothing",' he said, 'describes the religion of the pagans, who do not bring the heavenly and the earthly into union and adopt a faith of folly; and they are "counted less than nothing", like chaff blown about by the wind.' He also interpreted the verse: "God created the (*eth*) heavens and the (*eth*) earth" (Gen. I, 1), referring the first *eth* to the Right Hand and the second to the Left Hand; and these two "stand together" (Isa. XLVIII, 13) through the agency of the Crown which is called *zoth* and which comprises both Mercy and Judgement. Thereupon R. Hiya said: 'Will our master allow us to explain why we have come? It is written: "and it came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt", and from what we have just heard we gather that this verse contains the same idea which you have been expressing, so that we have just come at the right time to consult you.' R. Simeon prefaced his answer with a reference to the verse: "Who is like unto the Lord our God who dwelleth on high, and yet humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth?" (Ps. CXIII, 5), which he expounded thus: ' "Who is like unto the Lord our God", who ascends to the highest spheres in order to be crowned with the supernal holy crown, the splendour of which is more resplendent than the glories of all lesser crowns; "and yet he humbleth himself" to descend from crown to crown, that is, from one sphere to another, from one abode of light to another, and each one lower than the last, and all this in order to exercise His providential care for the higher and lower worlds?' He then proceeded: 'Instead of "at midnight" in this passage we should have expected "about (*ka-hazi*) midnight",

which was the phrase actually used by Moses when he predicted the event. Our colleagues, we know, explain that Moses used the word "about", so that, were the event not to occur at the exact second of midnight, the Egyptian astrologers should have no chance of calling him a liar. But this hardly solves the difficulty, for in that case he should not have put the expression in the mouth of the Lord (Ex. XI, 4). Another difficulty is that Moses, when speaking of the death of the firstborn, referred to the "firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill" (v. 5), yet in our verse we read of the "firstborn of the captive that was in the house of the pit". And on top of all comes your question, which is the last straw that breaks the camel's back. The whole subject, however, is explained esoterically among "the reapers of the field", for it contains a supreme mystery, having been proclaimed by the faithful prophet, even Moses, of whom it is written, "Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness [37b] above thy fellows" (Ps. XLV, 3, 8). "Thou art fairer than the children of men" refers to Seth and Enoch; "grace is put into thy lips" means that Moses was greater than Noah and his sons; "therefore God hath blessed thee" signifies that he was above Abraham and Isaac; "oil of gladness" suggests that Moses was greater than Jacob; and "above thy fellows" that he was above all other prophets. Could a man so great, who ascended to degrees not attained by any other, have spoken with such a lack of precision? The truth, however, is as follows. It is written: "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke?" (S.S. III, 6). This smoke symbolizes the Crown which is called *Zoth* (lit. this, i.e. the Sefirah Malkuth—Kingdom) and "Woman"; as it is written, "This (*le-zoth*) shall be called woman" (Gen. II, 23). This Crown which is called *zoth* rules over the middle of the night, so that it is able to be at one and the same moment white to Israel and black to the heathens; and so long as the night is not divided it cannot perform this function, as we learn from the case of Abraham, for whom, as we are told, "the night divided against them" (Gen. XIV, 15). So here,

Moses used the expression *ka-haẓoth*, meaning thereby "when the night is divided", knowing that it would not perform its function till then; but the latter expression "in the middle" (lit. half) means "in the second half", which is always the period when this *zoth* executes judgements. As to the references to the "firstborn behind the mill", and to the "firstborn of the captive and of the cattle", they relate to the three grades of impurity, with all their spirits and powers, higher and lower, with whom Pharaoh, being himself the wiliest of all his magicians, endeavoured to entangle the Israelites so subtly and so inextricably that they should never again be free. Here it was that the power of the Holy One, blessed be He, was revealed: [38a] for He loosened all the bonds of impurity and broke all those "crowns" of magic, that His children might be liberated. Therefore it is written: "Who would not fear thee, O king of nations . . . forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms there is none like unto thee" (Jer. x, 7).'

Having spoken these things, R. Simeon wept, meditating on the greatness of the Lord; then he lifted up his voice, and said: "And so you thought this passage a bundle of contradictions! But verily, the significance of the Exodus is great indeed! For this reason the Holy One, blessed be He, frequently reminds Israel of her deliverance, as when He says: "Who hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt." (Ex. xx, 2). Now, as there are ten crowns above, so likewise there are ten such below; and all are concealed in the three grades symbolized by "the firstborn of Pharaoh", "the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill", and "the firstborn of the cattle", by means of which Pharaoh sought to keep the Israelites captive for ever. Blessed indeed are ye, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for whose sake the knots of magic were loosed, because the Holy One, blessed be He, recollected in His mercy and lovingkindness the indissoluble bonds of your faithfulness, as it says: "And the Lord remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob" (*Ibid.* II, 24). Festivals, Sabbaths, and all days of moment in Israel have this "remembrance" for their object and basis, therefore the deliverance from Egypt is mentioned

in connection with such days. Truly, this "remembrance" is the foundation and root of the whole Torah, the basis of all the commandments and of the real faith of Israel. Now, as to your question why the last act did not take place by day, the fact is that in this connection there is an apparent contradiction, since on the one hand we read, "*to-day* come ye out" (Ex. XII, 4), and on the other, "The Lord thy God brought thee out of Egypt *at night*" (Deut. XVI, 1). However, it is true that Israel's essential redemption took place at night, because only at night does the Holy One exercise judgement, therefore it was night when the knots of sorcery were loosened and the bonds of darkness rent in twain; yet were they led out by day, before the eyes of the world, that all men might marvel at the works of the Lord; therefore they were freed "with a high hand, in front of all the Egyptians" (Num. XXXIII, 3).'

R. Simeon then ceased, and R. Hiya and R. Jose prostrated themselves before him and kissed his hand, saying, with tears in their eyes: 'Surely not only earthly creatures, but also celestial beings, look out from their abode to catch a sight of thee! The Holy One, blessed be He, built Jerusalem below as a counterpart of the Jerusalem above. He made the walls of the city and the gates thereof holy. None may enter the city unless the gates be opened for him, nor ascend unless the steps of the walls are firm. Who is able to open the gates of the city, who can fix the steps of the walls but R. Simeon ben Yochai? For it is he who opens the gates of the mysteries of wisdom, and fixes the ladder to the higher spheres! It is written, "Three times in the year all thy males shall be seen before the face of the Lord" (Ex. XXII, 17). Who then is this "face of the Lord"? None other than R. Simeon ben Yochai! And as to the reference to the "males" appearing before him, indeed only "the males of the males" (the truly manly, i.e. students of the esoteric lore) may draw near to him.'

R. Simeon continued: 'I have not yet finished answering your questions. You ask why the smiting of the firstborn took place at night. It was because then they were all at home, and not abroad in the fields. Further, tradition tells

us that night was as bright as a day in Tamuz, therefore the whole Egyptian people could witness the mighty hand of the Holy One: "the night shined as the day; the darkness was as light" [38b] (Ps. CXXXIX, 13). Nothing so miraculous was witnessed since the creation of the world. 'Come and see,' he said, 'it is written: "It is a night (*leyl*) of observations unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt; this is that night (*ha-layla*) of the Lord, observations to all the children of Israel" (Ex. XII, 42). Now, why "observations" in plural, and "night" first in the masculine gender (*layil*), and then in the feminine (*layla*)? To indicate the union which took place on that night between the Masculine and Feminine aspects in the Divine attributes, and also the same union which will take place in the future Redemption: "As in the days of thy coming out of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things" (Micah VII, 15).'

R. Hiya and R. Jose sat down and R. Simeon taught them the mysteries connected with the book of Leviticus, and they used to come every day and study with him. One day R. Simeon went out for a walk, and they, following, came upon him in a wood. They all sat down, and R. Simeon began to speak thus: 'It is written: "All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a righteous man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in wickedness" (Eccl. VII, 15). How could Solomon, the wisest among men, have spoken thus? He must have intended some inner meaning, for we see for ourselves that the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He, are not thus, for He "giveth every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his works" (Jer. XVII, 10). But Solomon hinted here at two things. When the "eyes" of the Holy One "run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zech. IV, 10), and the world is full of sinners, their guilt is visited upon the one righteous of his generation, whereas God is patient with the wicked and waits for their repentance. If they do not repent, they are left without an intercessor, for "the righteous perisheth", i.e. he has been taken away from the world. It is on this account that the Rabbis have warned us to live only in a place which is the abode of men of pious

deeds, and woe betide him who fixes his dwelling among the wicked! He will surely be "seized" for their sins! Conversely, when one lives among pious people one shares the reward of their goodness. Rab Hisda may serve as an example. Originally he lived among the Cappadocians, and suffered great poverty (cf. T. B. Shab. 140*b*) and many grievous ills; but when, after some time, he left those parts and removed to Sepphoris, all went well with him: he benefited both materially and spiritually, and he remarked, "all these blessings have come upon me because I have made my abode among people on whom the Holy One bestows His loving-kindness". There is, however, another explanation of the passage, arising out of another difficulty in the text. How could Solomon say, "All things have I seen in the days of my vanity (*hebli*)"? Did not Solomon attain to wisdom beyond all his contemporaries (1 Kings V, 10, 11)? And did not his seven names—Solomon, Jedidiah, Agur, Jakeh, Ithiel, Lemuel, Koheleth (cf. Midrash Rabbah, Eccl. I, 2)—correspond to the [39a] seven supernal grades, the greatest of which is Koheleth, the essence of them all, signifying the supernal Holy Assembly of ten (Sephiroth)? Could he whose names thus symbolize grades of wisdom, and whose three books contain the whole essence of it—the Song of Songs representing Grace; Koheleth, Judgement; and Proverbs, Mercy—could such a one as he have said: "In the days of my *vanity*", and "vanity of vanities"? However, *hebel* is here to be understood in the literal sense, namely "breath", and conveys a very precious lesson. From the "breath" which issues out of the mouth the voice is formed, and according to the well-known dictum the world is upheld only by the merit of the "breath" of little school children who have not yet tasted sin. Breath is itself a mixture, being composed of air and moisture, and through it the world is carried on. Esoterically speaking, the breath of the little ones becomes "voice", and spreads throughout the whole universe, so that they become the guardians of the world. Solomon inherited this "breath" from his father, and through it he saw with clear vision. Hence he said, "I have seen all things in the days of my breath (*hebel*)". And what did he

see? "The righteous perishing in his righteousness." That is to say, if this breath emanates from the sphere of Judgement, then "a righteous man perisheth in his righteousness"; but when the breath derives from the attribute of Mercy, then it may happen that "there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life". Therefore it says "in the days", and not "in the day", as it all depends on the "when" and the "whence" the "breath" emanates.'

As they thus sat listening to the master's expositions, they suddenly beheld smoke ascending and descending at a little distance, where there was a clearing in the wood. Said R. Simeon: 'The ground has been heated by the light from above, and now this field emits an aroma of all spices, passing sweet. Let us remain here, for the Shekinah is present with us. It is "the smell of the field which the Lord hath blessed" (Gen. XXVII, 27).' Presently he began to comment on this verse and referred to the tradition (cf. Midrash, Rab., Gen., LXV, 18; Zohar, Gen. 142*b*) that the "precious garments" which emitted a sweet odour when Jacob appeared before Isaac originally belonged to Adam, and in time came into the hands of Nimrod, "the mighty hunter", and finally to Esau, who was also a hunter. 'It has been remarked', he said, 'that these garments were made by the Holy One Himself (Gen. III, 21), by the agency of both Divine Names, YHVH and Elohim, which is more than can be said for heaven and earth, which were created only by Elohim (Gen. I, 1). It is rather difficult to understand how they came to Esau. For in the first place we are told that God made garments for Eve also (*Ibid.*), and what became of these? And surely Adam and Eve would have been [39*b*] buried in them and not abandoned such a precious gift. The truth is, however, that no other human being ever wore those garments, which placed Adam and Eve on a par with supernal beings. And as for the "goodly raiment" which Rebekah put upon Jacob (Gen. XXVII, 15), this was royal apparel of silk and gold, which it is usual to keep in perfumes, and this is what Isaac smelt, and he said, "See the smell of my son" (*Ibid.* 27), because he knew that the smell was so sweet on account of him. How, it may be asked, did Isaac know of "the smell of the field which the Lord hath blessed" (*Ibid.*)? From two sources, which are essentially the same. It says, "and Isaac went out to meditate in the field" (Gen. XXIV, 63). Why in the field? Did he not have a house or any other place in which to pray? The truth is that that field was actually the very one which Abraham bought from the sons of Heth, that field which was near the cave of Machpelah; and when Isaac passed it the Shekinah was present there and the field emitted holy heavenly aromas, and Isaac, recognizing the Presence, made it a regular place for his prayer. The second fact was that Isaac smelled the myrrh ascending from Mount Moriah. Thus, when Jacob approached him, the Paradisiacal savours brought back to him the recollection of the sweet odour he smelled in that field.

ON THE TENTH DAY OF THIS MONTH THEY SHALL TAKE TO THEM A LAMB. According to R. Abba, the tenth day was chosen because on this day the Jubilee illumines the Moon (i.e. Binah communicates light to Malkuth); for of the Jubilee it is written: "On the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement" (Lev. XXIII, 27). "They shall take a lamb." Why a lamb? Because it symbolized the power of the lowest "crown", which the Holy One broke, the "crown" to which all the other inferior "crowns" cling, forming the unholy triad signified by the phrase, "lambs, menservants, and womenservants", sent by Jacob to Esau, as a sop, as it were, to the evil powers which the latter represented. The Holy One said: "Do ye perform this act of slaughtering the Passover lamb, and I myself will nullify its power above. Do ye let it pass through fire (v. 8) here below, and I shall lead the impure principality which it represents through the fiery Stream." And why was the lamb to be tied up on the tenth day and slaughtered on the fourteenth? Because, according to R. Abba, the four days corresponded to the four hundred years that Israel was subjected to the power of Egypt. And why was the slaughter performed in the evening? Because that is the time when judgement predominates above and below, and also because

it was at this time ("between the evenings") that Israel's exiles were foretold [40a] to Abraham, as it is written: "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abraham, and lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him" (Gen. xv, 12). "Horror" signifies one supernal "crown" which represents Egypt; "darkness" is a second such, representing Babylon; and "great" refers to the Edomite (Roman) exile, which was to be the hardest of all. Thus it is seen that the Israelites did not go out of Egypt until all the supernal powers and principalities which were Israel's enemies had been brought to nought; but when these things had come to pass the people were freed from their domination and brought under the holy and heavenly sway of the Holy One, blessed be He, and were joined to Him and to Him alone, as it is written: "For unto me the children of Israel are servants; they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt" (Lev. xxv, 55). Similarly, R. Simeon interpreted the verse: "Even the first day ye shall put away leaven (*ḥamez*) out of your houses, for whosoever eateth leavened bread (*maḥmezeth*), etc." (Ex. xii, 15). Said he: '*Seor*, *ḥamez*, and *maḥmezeth* all mean one and the same thing, and are symbols of the same supernal grade, namely the powers appointed to represent all the other nations, which are pagan and enemies of Israel, and are termed variously "evil imagination", "foreign domination", "strange god", and "other gods".' Said God to Israel: 'All these years ye have been subject to an alien power, but now you are free men, you shall put away leaven, etc.' Said R. Judah: 'If so, why is leaven prohibited on these seven days only?' R. Simeon answered: 'This ceremony is only necessary when the Israelite requires to demonstrate the fact of his freedom. If a king raises a man to a high office, the latter will celebrate his elevation by rejoicing and donning costly festive garments for a few days; but subsequently he merely celebrates the anniversary as it comes round. The same is true of Israel: they, too, have each year their season of joy and gladness when they celebrate the high honour which the Holy One, blessed be He, showed them when He brought them out of

the power of impurity into the invincible power of His holiness. Therefore it is written, "seven days ye shall eat *mazoth* (unleavened bread)".' Said R. Simeon further: 'The unleavened bread is called "the bread of poverty" (Deut. xvi, 3), because at that time the moon was not at full strength, the reason being that, although the Israelites were circumcised, the rite had not been completed by "*peri'ah*", and therefore the seal of the covenant was not revealed in its complete form. But later, when this completion had been achieved—namely at Marah, where Moses "made for them a statute and an ordinance" (Ex. xv, 25)—the Holy One spake unto them, saying: "Until now ye have eaten the 'bread of poverty', but from now on your bread shall emanate from a far other region: '*I will rain bread from heaven for you*' " (*Ibid.* xvi, 4). This phrase means literally "from heaven", that is, from the very centre of Grace, and not, as previously, from the blemished "Moon". Therefore the holy Israelites observe as a memorial the anniversary of the days when they came under the wings of the Shekinah, and eat the bread which emanates from Her. And why was the rite not brought to its completion in Egypt? Because the Exodus would then have been delayed until those who had undergone this operation had recovered. [40b] Observe that when the Israelites were about to enter the Holy Land, Moses described it as "a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness" (Deut. viii, 9), in contrast to the "bread of misery, of poverty", which was their food in Egypt, when the moon did not derive blessing and light from the sun, when she was not illumined by the Jubilee. And because they did not carry out the *peri'ah* in Egypt, the unification and harmonization of the Divine attributes was not manifested in its fulness. Why they continued to eat the "bread of poverty" in the land of Israel was in remembrance of Egypt.' R. Simeon also connected the words, "Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement" (Lev. xxiii, 27), with the words, "In the tenth day of this month" (Ex. xii, 3), used in regard to the Passover lamb; for the one "tenth day" is dependent on the other.

[1]AND THE PEOPLE TOOK THEIR DOUGH BEFORE IT WAS LEAVENED. On the strength of this is founded the precept that the leaven should be burned on the Passover Eve. "Leaven" and "unleaven" symbolize the evil and the good inclinations in man.

It is obligatory for every Israelite to relate the story of the Exodus on the Passover night. He who does so fervently and joyously, telling the tale with a high heart, shall be found worthy to rejoice in the Shekinah in the world to come, for rejoicing brings forth rejoicing; and the joy of Israel causes the Holy One Himself to be glad, so that He calls together all the Family above and says unto them: "Come ye and hearken unto the praises which My children bring unto Me! Behold how they rejoice in My Redemption!" Then all the angels and supernal beings gather round and observe Israel, how she sings and rejoices because of her Lord's own Redemption—and seeing the rejoicings below, the supernal beings also break into jubilation for that the Holy One possesses on earth a people so holy, whose joy in the Redemption of their Lord is so great and so powerful. For all that terrestrial rejoicing increases the power of the Lord and His hosts in the regions above, just as an earthly king gains strength from the praises of his subjects, the fame of his glory being thus spread throughout the world. [41a] And similarly a man should acknowledge and proclaim any wonder that God has wrought for him. This should he do, not in order that the Omniscient should become aware of all His wonderful acts, since to Him all things of the past, as well as of the future, are already known, but rather in order that the praises may ascend even unto the highest spheres and awaken among the supernal beings a responsive outburst of praise and worshipful delight in the faithfulness of His people and in the invincible greatness of His glory, who is Himself rejoiced at the rejoicings of His people and His heavenly hosts. Conversely, with the confession of sin: the Holy One is aware of all man's sins and needs no reminder thereof; yet, since Satan, the supernal adversary and accuser, continually lies in wait, ever ready to bring man's sins before the Holy One, it is but a natural precaution to hasten on in advance of him, making full confession of one's sins, so that the Accuser, when he comes, may find himself anticipated and left without ground for his denunciations, and so be discouraged and leave his intended victim alone. Then, should the sinner carry out his repentance fully, he will be fully exonerated, and all will be well; and if not, Satan will thus obtain a just opportunity to rise up against the impious one, saying: "Here is a man who has had the audacity to appear before Thee, and yet has rebelled against his Lord!" Therefore man should at all times beware lest he falter in his fealty, and strive ever to be found a faithful servant before the Holy One, blessed be He.

[1] From here to the end of the section (p. 43b) is from the *Ray'a Mehemna*.

Then follows the command that we should eat unleavened bread during Passover, it being a memorial, throughout the generations, of the true secret of Faith. For, as already stated elsewhere, Israel at that time emerged from the association with idolatry and entered into the mystery of Faith.

THIS IS THE ORDINANCE OF THE PASSOVER: THERE SHALL NO STRANGER EAT THEREOF. This commandment is a memorial of the Passover of Egypt. The lamb had to be kept from the tenth day of the month, because on that date the moon begins to increase her light until the fifteenth day, when she is in her full strength. The lamb was slaughtered on the fourteenth, "between the evenings", namely at an hour when judgement hangs over the world. It signified the removal of the impurity from the holy sign (of the circumcision). Therefore "no uncircumcised person should eat thereof" (v. 48); for this sacrifice was brought by sons of the covenant, in order to break down the power of the "other side", to remove the "foreskin" from the sign of the holy covenant. When the Holy One came to Egypt He saw the blood of the Passover lamb smeared on the door, as well as the blood of the covenant, and the doors purged with hyssop, in order, as has already been explained, that the powers of impurity might be exorcised at the time of the supreme redemption of Israel. This memorial of the past redemption is, however, at the same time a sign and a token of the future Redemption, when the Holy One will "slaughter" the evil inclination once and for all. [41b] And because He killed all the firstborn of the "other side", He ordered that the firstborn of Israel should be redeemed, so that nothing of that "side" should cleave to them. In all things He watched over Israel like a father over his children.

WITH BITTER HERBS THEY SHALL EAT IT . . . NEITHER SHALL YE BREAK A BONE THEREOF. The bitter herbs signify the Shekinah's exile with Israel in all their bitter afflictions in Egypt. Why were the bones of the Passover lamb not allowed to be broken? So that the dogs might drag them about and the Egyptians be thus made to realize the nothingness of that which they worshipped, and so be put to shame, and the Holy One be glorified.

SANCTIFY UNTO ME ALL THE FIRSTBORN. The *'am haarez* (ordinary man) requires redemption from the power of the evil impulse, which is his lord and master, as Jacob averred when he said: "Let my lord (Esau = evil) pass over before his servant" (Gen. XXXIII, 14). In this world the "evil impulse" is indeed the lord, because of the multitude of sins and evils which attack the body of man; as it has been truly said: "The righteous is judged by the good impulse, the sinner by the evil impulse, and the intermediate, he who is between these two extremes, is judged by both".

Thus, he who is of the intermediate sort is a "brother" to the good as well as to the evil impulse, as Esau, the evil one, said to Jacob: "My brother, keep that thou hast unto thyself" (Gen. XXXIII, 9). When, however, there is a preponderance of meritorious works, the spirit breaks down the two "nightwatches of asses and dogs" and he ascends to the morning watch wherein resides man, and becomes master of his animal nature. As for the intermediate person, a war is continually being waged between the principalities of justification and of condemnation to gain control of him; and when the side of condemnation sees that it cannot prevail against him, it tries to make him forget all his Torah, by transferring him into one of the seven regions of forgetfulness. For when a man is about to be born into the world the angel Gabriel wrestles with the dust of which man is formed, and inculcates into the potential man seventy languages, which, however, he retains not when he enters into this world, since the evil impulse wipes them out from his mind, so that the battle between the conflicting principles begins even before the man is born. Before all this, there are four angels which descend with him if he comes of pious stock. One of the four angels will be Michael, in remembrance of Abraham; one Gabriel, in remembrance of Isaac; one Nuriel, in remembrance of Jacob; and one Raphael, in remembrance of Adam; and the good impulse hovers over him. But if he himself is unworthy and possesses no heritage of righteousness to assist him, four powers of evil shall be his companions when he enters into this world, namely, Anger, Destruction, Depravity, and Wrath; and the evil impulse hovers over him to become his judge in the world to come. This explains the aforesaid saying, that, "the wicked is judged by the evil inclination, the righteous by the good, and the intermediate by good and evil mingled". In the case of the last-mentioned, Gabriel, who represents the good impulse, [42a] and Samael, who represents the evil, become his judges. For every man who is compounded of the four elements is accompanied by four angels on his right hand and four on his left, those already named; and from the side of his body Metatron presses close to him at the right and Samael at the left. Now all men are formed of the four elements, but on the order in which these elements are found—that is, the order of the planets with which each man is connected—depends the order of the angels who accompany him, and also the potential characteristics of the man. Thus, if his ruling planet be the Lion, Michael will lead, and be followed by Gabriel, and after him Raphael, and lastly Nuriel. If, however, his planet is the Ox, first comes Gabriel, then Michael, then Nuriel, then Raphael. If the Eagle be the planet by which he is influenced, Nuriel will be first, then Michael, followed first by Gabriel and then by Raphael. And should his planet be Man, then will Raphael lead, with Michael, Gabriel and Nuriel coming after

in the order named. Now all aspects of Michael are of the attribute of mercy. A man whose leading angel is Michael will be benevolent, he will be pious and wise; but all this applies only if he is a student of the Torah, for if he is not so he will be the very reverse of all this, since he will be formed after the evil inclination; he will be stupid and unfeeling, without benevolence or worth—for no ignorant man can be truly pious. Should a man be from the side of Gabriel, his attributes will all partake chiefly of the quality of justice: he will stand up courageously against the wicked; he will prevail over his own evil inclinations, will abhor sin and cleave unto all things righteous, and he will become a judge by profession; but again, all this will only come to pass if he study the Torah with diligence and attain proficiency; should he neglect this, he will be as strong in iniquity as otherwise in holiness; he will rejoice in the tribulations of the righteous; he will be hard in his condemnations, bold in evildoing, with no fear of sin; he will have a red face, and will be of the type of Esau—a blood-shedder. He whose planet is the Eagle possesses neither the attribute of mercy nor that of justice in a marked degree, but is either moderately good or moderately bad, as his good or evil inclination obtains influence over him, as his countenance reveals, red and white being blended therein. He who is under the guidance of the planet Man combines in himself—in so far as he derives his characteristics from the good side—all the good qualities: he is wise and pious, strong in intellectual apprehension, sin-fearing, full of excellent virtues; and the colour of his countenance is dark. But if he is governed by the principle of evil, he will be full of bad qualities. Now if a man's evil actions predominate, all the (angelic) hosts of the good prompting will leave him and those of the evil prompting obtain control, and Samael will become completely master of him and ruler over all the members of his body—Samael and his whole band. On the other hand, should his good actions be plentiful, all his evil concomitants will be removed, and his good inclinations permeate his whole being, so that the powers of holiness may obtain entire sway over him and the holy name YHVH will rule over him. Should he by nature belong to the class of intermediaries, the heavenly hosts will be ranged at his right hand and on his left, the one side accusing and the other defending, and his ultimate salvation or destruction will depend on the relative strength of these conflicting celestial hosts, for whichever wins will claim him, be it for justice or for mercy. Therefore it has been said that man should always imagine that the fate of the whole world depends upon him. Now he who emanates from the side of Michael is called "firstborn". Michael's grade is white silver, and therefore the redemption of the firstborn is silver: five *sela'im*, according to the numerical value of the letter *he* in Abraham. Should such a man be successful in the study of the Torah, then a

letter *yod* is added to him, which symbolizes holiness: for with the numerical value of *yod*—namely ten—the firstborn of cattle had to be redeemed. And when a man shall have reached this degree of holiness, then the words "Israel is holy to the Lord" (Jer. II, 3) can indeed be applied to him. Now all the supernal holy beings (*hayoth*) are called according to the letters of the Holy Name, as it is written, "Every one that is called by my name, I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him" (Isa. XLIII, 7). And not only these celestial creatures themselves, but also all lesser creatures created through the instrumentality of these holy beings are stamped with this name in order that it may proclaim Him who created it. The *Yod* is the symbol of the head of all creatures; the two *Hé*'s represent the five fingers of the right hand and the left; the *Vau* is the symbol of the body. Yet God says, "to whom then will ye liken me that I should be equal to him?" (*Ibid.* XL, 25), which means, "among all created things there is none that could be likened to Me even among the number of those whom I have created in the likeness of the signs of My Name; for I can efface the form and then create newly again and yet again, but there is no god above Me who could efface [42b] My likeness". Should one ask: "Is it not written, Ye saw no manner of similitude?" the answer would be: "Truly we did behold him under a certain similitude, for is it not written, 'and the simulitude of the Lord should he (Moses) behold' (Num. XII, 8)?" But only in the similitude which Moses beheld was the Lord revealed, not in any other similitude of any creature formed by His signs. Hence it is written: "To whom then will ye liken God? Or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" (Isa. XL, 18). Even that "similitude" was a likeness of the Holy One, blessed be He, not in His own place, for that cannot be penetrated, but in the aspect of the King when He shows forth His power to rule over the whole of His creation, appearing, therefore, to each of His creatures according to the capacity of each to comprehend Him, as it is written: "And through the prophets I am represented in similitudes" (Hos. XII, 11). And therefore He says: "Although I represent Myself to you in your own likeness, to whom will ye liken Me that I should be equal to him?" For in the beginning, before shape and form had been created, He was without form and similitude. Therefore it is forbidden to one who apprehends Him as He is before creation to picture Him under any form or shape whatsoever, not even by His letters *Hé* and *Vau*, not by the whole of His Holy Name, nor by any letter or sign soever. The words, "For ye saw no manner of similitude" thus mean, "Ye saw nothing which could be represented by any form or shape, nothing which ye could present or simulate by any finite conception". But when He had created the form of supernal Man it was to Him as a chariot, and He descended on it, to be known

according to the style "YHVH", in order that He might be known by His attributes and perceived in each attribute separately. For this reason He let Himself be called "*El, Elohim, Shaddai, Zebaoth*, and *YHVH*", each being a symbol to men of His various Divine attributes, that it may be made manifest that the world is sustained by mercy and by justice, according to the works of men. Had the brightness of the glory of the Holy One, blessed be His Name, not been shed over the whole of His creation, how could He have been perceived even by the wise? He would have remained unapprehendable, and the words "The whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. VI, 3) could never be spoken with truth. But woe unto the man who should presume to compare the Lord with any attribute, even one which is His own, much less any human created form, "whose foundation is in the dust" (Job IV, 19), and whose products are frail creatures, soon vanishing, soon forgotten. The only conception of the Holy One, blessed be He, which man dare frame is of His sovereignty over some particular attribute or over creation as a whole. And if we perceive Him not under those manifestations, there is left neither attribute, nor similitude, nor form in Him; even as the sea, whose waters have neither form nor tangibility in themselves, but only when they are spread over a certain vessel which is the earth. On the basis of this fact we can calculate thus: The source of the sea is one. A current issues from it with a revolution which is *Yod*. The source is one and the current makes two. Next it makes a great basin, like a channel dug in the earth, which is filled by the waters which emanate from the source. It is this basin which we know as "Sea": this is the third factor involved. This large basin is split up into seven channels, which are like so many long tubes. Thus the waters are conveyed from the sea into these seven channels. The source, the current, the sea, and the seven channels form together the number ten. Should the master who constructed these tubes come to break them up, then the waters return to their source, and there remains nought but broken vessels, dry, without water. It is thus that the Cause of causes has brought forth the ten Sephiroth, and called the Crown the "Source", an inexhaustible fount of light, wherefore He designates Himself "*En-sof*", Limitless. He has neither shape nor form, and there is no vessel that could contain Him, no means to comprehend Him. It is in this sense that it has been said, "Search not the things that are too hard for thee, and seek not the thing which is hidden from thee" (Ben Sira, 320—324). Then He formed a vessel, small as the letter *Yod*, which is filled from Him, and He called it "Wisdom-gushing Fountain", and Himself in virtue of it "wise". Afterwards He made a large vessel and called it "Sea", and designated it "Understanding" (*Binah*) and Himself in virtue of it "understanding". He is both "wise" and "understanding" in His own

essence: for Wisdom does not merit the title by itself, but only through Him who is wise and who has filled it from His "fountain"; and Understanding does not merit the title by itself, but only through Him who filled it from His own essence: if He were to depart from it it would be turned into aridity. In regard to this it is written, "As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up" (Job XIV, 11). Finally, "He smites (the sea) into seven streams" (Isa. XI, 15), i.e. He diverts it into seven precious vessels, and calls them "Greatness", "Strength", "Beauty", "Victory", "Majesty", "Foundation", "Sovereignty"; and Himself He calls "great" in the "Greatness", "strong" in the "Strength", "beauteous" in "Beauty", "victorious" in "Victory"; in "Majesty" He calls His Name "the beauty of our Fashioner" and in "Foundation" "righteous" (cf. Prov. X, 25). In "Foundation" He sustains all things: all vessels and all worlds. [43a] Finally, in "Sovereignty" He calls Himself "King", whose is "the greatness, the strength, the beauty, the victory, the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine. Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all" (1 Chr. XXIX, 11). All things are in His power, whether He wills to lessen the number of vessels or to increase the light which springs from them, or whether He wills the contrary. Above Him, however, there is no god who could increase or lessen. Then He created ministering beings to those vessels: one throne supported on four columns and six steps to the throne: ten altogether. And the whole throne is like the chalice of benediction, in regard to which ten things are formulated, in harmony with the Torah which was given in Ten Words (Decalogue), and with the Ten Words by which the world was created. Then He prepared for the throne angelic hierarchies to serve Him: *malachim* (angels), *erelim*, *seraphim*, *hayoth* (living beings), *ophanim*, *hamshalim*, *elim*, *elohim*, *bene* (sons of) *elohim*, *ishim* (supernal "men"). To these He appointed as ministers Samael and all his groups—these are like clouds to ride upon when He descends to earth: they are like horses. That the clouds are called "chariots" is expressed in the words, "Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt" (Isa. XIX, 1). Thus the Egyptians saw their Chieftain like a horse bearing the chariot of the Holy One, and straightway "the idols of Egypt were moved at His presence, and the heart of Egypt melted in the midst of it" (*Ibid.*), i.e. they were "moved" from their "faith" in their own Chieftain.

AND EVERY FIRSTLING OF AN ASS THOU SHALT REDEEM WITH A LAMB, AND IF THOU WILT NOT REDEEM IT . . . THOU SHALT BREAK HIS NECK. The ass and the lamb symbolize the evil and the good inclinations. The very evil can be turned into good by repentance: the "ass" must be redeemed by a "lamb". In other words, even if a man is an "ass", a spiritual ignoramus, he

can be redeemed from the exile of darkness and be included in the redemption of Israel, "the scattered sheep" (Jer. L, 17). But if he does not repent, "thou shalt break his neck", meaning, he belongs to the stiffnecked ones who will be blotted out from the Book of Life, for concerning such unrepentant sinners it is written: "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (Ex. XXXII, 33).

AND IT SHALL BE FOR A TOKEN UPON THINE HAND AND FOR FRONTLETS BETWEEN THINE EYES. This commandment has also another significance besides being a Divine ordinance, for the phylacteries are signs and means of sanctification, symbols of the beauty of the supernal colours. It is written: "And thou shalt do that what is right and good." "Right" here indicates the phylactery of the hand, which has to be supplemented by and joined with the phylactery of the forehead. The four Biblical sections (Ex. XIII, 1-10, 11-16; Deut. VI, 4-9, XI, 13-21) are in the head-phylactery in four compartments, but in the hand-phylactery in one, for the latter has nothing of itself but what it receives from above (the head). This mystery is expressed in the words, "all rivers run into the sea" (Eccl. I, 7). And because it draws the influx of Divine light from that which is above, it is called *tephillah* (entreaty, prayer, the traditional name for phylactery); and because it derives holiness, it is called *kedushah*, and it also symbolizes "Sovereignty", "Kingdom", the Kingdom of God in its completeness. The symbolism of the four sections has been explained in various places. The first of them (Ex. XIII, 1-10) [43b] is of supreme significance, containing all the four divisions of the supernal light which emanates from *Ain* (lit. "nothing", the hidden, unapproachable, transcendent). Each word in the verse, "sanctify unto Me all the firstborn" stands for something connected with the Divine attributes: "*sanctify*" is related to the hidden region of supernal Holiness, the mystery of the Wisdom which comes from above; "*unto Me*" refers to Binah—Understanding, the Mystery of the supernal world, the inner Hall—as it is written, "unto Me are the children of Israel slaves"; "unto Me belongs every firstborn"; "ye shall be unto Me a precious people"—all these are connected with Binah. "*All*" signifies Grace: grace above and grace below; "firstborn" has a symbolic reference to "Israel my firstborn" (Ex. IV, 22), who represents all the sides and all the colours. These four words, esoterically considered, contain all the truths which are given in greater detail in the four Scripture sections written on the parchment scrolls of the phylacteries. Thus the first section is a summary of all the four. The second section (Ex. XIII, 11-16), referring, as it does, to the Exodus from Egypt, symbolizes the freedom of the "Jubilee", and represents Binah. The third section, the Shema, contains the mystery of the right side, called "The Supernal

Grace", for it effects the union of all things extending unto the four quarters of the universe; and the Holy One, blessed be He, through the medium of this attribute, brings forth order and harmony in the whole universe, a harmony which extends even to the lowest depths. By this attribute of Grace the Holy One created the world, when He wrapped Himself in the garment of light. This Supernal Grace is the Unifier. For this reason the section of the Shema is joined to that of "And it shall be"; for the act which makes each day a unity and likewise forms the whole sum of separate days into the perfect whole, is the fact of following the Divine Will in knowledge and action; and through this act alone (of concentration on the union during prayer and the recitation of the Shema) can that union of which we have frequently spoken be attained: that is, the union of each day, the union which is expressed in the sentence: "Hear, O Israel, YHVH Elohenu YHVH is one". These three are one. How can the three Names be one? Only through the perception of Faith: in the vision of the Holy Spirit, in the beholding of the hidden eyes alone. The mystery of the audible voice is similar to this, for though it is one yet it consists of three elements—fire, air, and water, which have, however, become one in the mystery of the voice. Even so it is with the mystery of the threefold Divine manifestations designated by YHVH Elohenu YHVH—three modes which yet form one unity. This is the significance of the voice which man produces in the act of unification, when his intent is to unify all from the En-sof to the end of creation. This is the daily unification, the secret of which has been revealed in the holy spirit. There are many kinds of unification, and all are appropriate, one involving the other, but the one which is effected on earth by the symbolism of the voice is the most appropriate.

The fourth section (Deut. xi, 13-21) contains the mystery of rigorous Judgement: "Take heed to yourselves that your heart be not deceived" (v. 16). We have already dealt with the symbolism of the relationship of the two phylacteries to one another. The strap that is passed through the head-phylactery ends at the back of the head in a knot representing the letter *Daleth* (D. in Shaddai), and concerning it it is written: "And thou shalt see My hinder-parts", for all is tied up there in one knot. The strap that is passed through the hand-phylactery is fastened in a knot in the shape of the letter *Yod*, the sign of the mystery of the holy covenant, to which we have frequently referred. It is all a part of one mystery. Blessed are the Israelites for being made aware of this mystery. It is essential that every man should put on the phylacteries daily, in order that he may achieve the likeness of the supernal Prototype, and then "all the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of thee" (Deut. xxviii, 10).

BESHALAḤ

Ex. xiii, 17–xvii, 16

AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN PHARAOH SENT AWAY THE PEOPLE, ETC. R. Simeon discoursed here on the verse: "A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon shigionoth" (Hab. iii, 1). 'Why', he said, 'is this vision of Habakkuk designated "prayer", a title unique in the prophetic writings? Why do we find only a prayer of Habakkuk and not of Isaiah or Jeremiah? To explain this we must go back to the tradition which says that he was the son of the Shunammite woman who befriended Elisha, and that his name contains an allusion to Elisha's words, [44b] "about this set time, according to the time of life, thou wilt embrace (*ḥobeketh*) a son" (2 Kings iv, 16). The promise was fulfilled, but the child subsequently died. Why? Because it was given to her and not to her husband; it came from the "feminine" region alone, and everything emanating from the feminine principle ends in death. Elisha, seeing that the child was dead, realized the reason; and therefore "he lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm" (*Ibid.* 34); that is to say, he connected him with another supernal region where there is an abundance of life, not uprooting the child from the former region, but awakening a new spirit from above and restoring his soul to him. "And the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes" (v. 35). Now this child became the prophet Habakkuk. The duplicate form of his name (Habakkuk instead of *Ḥabuk*=embraced) suggests that he owed his life to two "embracings": one of [45a] his mother (cf. v. 16), and one of Elisha, one coming from the sphere to which he was attached at first, and the other from the higher supernal grade. Hence his prophetic utterance took the form of a prayer, as issuing from the place to which he was first attached; and it was "upon shigionoth" (lit. errors), because the day on which his birth

was announced was New Year's day, when the "errors" of mankind are judged by the Almighty. Hence, whenever the spirit of prophecy was stirred in him, he trembled, saying: "O Lord, I have the report of thee, and I am afraid" (Hab. III, 2). Therefore he prayed: "O Lord, revive thy work (i.e. himself) in the midst of the years . . . in wrath remember mercy" (*Ibid.*). Moreover, the fact that it does not say *shegioth* (errors), but *shigionoth*, shows that the reference is to the musical instruments, like "shigayon of David" (Ps. VII, 1), which were used by all the prophets (except Moses, who was independent of external aids to prophecy), in order to enter into an ecstatic mood before receiving the spirit of prophecy (cf. 1 Sam. X, 5; 2 Kings III, 15), and Habakkuk needed the calming influence of music more than anybody.'

R. Simeon continued: 'When the children of Israel went out of Egypt their spirits were broken because of their past sufferings, and there was no energy left in them and no will to participate in the joy, singing and exultation of Moses and Miriam (Ex. XV, 1–21). But when all those celestial hosts and chariots who accompanied the Shekinah on the way from Egypt began to sing and to praise the Lord for His glorious deeds, the Holy One awakened the spirits of the Israelites, putting new life into them, and they who had tasted death were healed by His touch, as it is written: "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light" (Ex. XIII, 21). All the ways emitted healing savours which entered into their bodies, and the singing of the celestial hosts entered into their souls, filling their spirits with joy and gladness. Pharaoh, however, and his hosts, and all the celestial principalities of Egypt and the other heathen nations, followed them from behind, until they reached Etham, on the edge of the wilderness.'

AND IT CAME TO PASS . . . THAT GOD LED THEM NOT THROUGH THE WAY OF THE LAND OF THE PHILISTINES, FOR IT WAS NEAR. That is to say, they were in near danger of breaking the oath which had been administered

to Abraham by Abimelech king of Gerar in the land of the Philistines, that he should deal with his people "according to the kindness that I have done unto thee" (Gen. XXI, 23, 24).

Mark the wondrous punishment that overtook the enemies of Israel. On the night of the Exodus there were three slayings in Egypt. First, the firstborn killed whomsoever they could lay hands on; then, the Holy One executed His judgement at midnight; and, lastly, Pharaoh, on seeing the havoc wrought upon his own household, himself arose and with bitterness and fury smote those princes and nobles who had advised him to persecute Israel. He rose up at midnight; yea, even at the hour and moment when the Holy One Himself began His judgement (Ex. XII, 30), did Pharaoh likewise rise up in wrath, and kill his officers and nobles, [45b] just as a dog, if hit with a stone, goes and bites another dog. Having done this, Pharaoh roamed through the market-places crying, "Rise up and get you forth from among my people" (*Ibid.* V, 31); and in fear he added, "and bless me also" (v. 32), as if to say, "let me live". Then, so eager was he to be rid of them that he himself accompanied them, as it says, "he *sent* the people away" (*beshallach*, lit. escorted).

AND GOD LED THE PEOPLE ABOUT THROUGH THE WAY OF THE WILDERNESS OF THE RED SEA. This was to pave the way for the manifestation of the Divine power at the Red Sea. R. Judah asked: 'Why was it that when the children of Israel were still in Egypt, and were not yet circumcised, nor in full communion with the Holy One, He yet spoke of them as "*my* people" (Ex. V, 1), and "my firstborn Israel" (*Ibid.* IV, 22), whereas now that they were circumcised, and had duly sacrificed the Passover lamb, and were fully joined to the Holy One, they are referred to merely as "the people"? The answer is that they were spoken of—not only here, but in many other places (e.g. Ex. XXXII, 1, 35)—as "the people" because of the "mixed multitude" which went out with them.'

R. Isaac and R. Judah were once journeying from Usha to Lud, and with them was a certain Jose driving a train of

laden camels. On the way this Jose turned aside and misconducted himself with a heathen woman who was gathering herbs in a field near by. R. Isaac and R. Judah were greatly shocked, and the latter exclaimed: 'Let us abandon this journey, since God has given us a sign that we should not associate with this wicked man or have any further intercourse with him'. So they changed their course. On making inquiries they found that his mother was a heathen woman and that his father had been born in illegitimacy, and they blessed God for saving them from him. R. Isaac was reminded of the verse: "Fret not thyself because of the evildoers" (Ps. XXXVII, 1). 'The evildoers,' he said, 'as opposed to "sinners" or "wicked men", are those who defile themselves and all who come into contact with them.' Said R. Judah: 'One must indeed beware of making friends (*re'im*) with the evildoers (*mere'im*), lest one should suffer for their deeds and be included in their judgement. Mark this. Were it not for that "mixed multitude", which joined and mingled with the Israelites, the sin of the "golden calf" would never have been perpetrated, and the children of Israel would not have had to suffer for it as they did. Nay, but for that sin Israel would have been, then and forever, that which the Holy One had ordained them to be; namely, pure as the angels and free from all evil: free from death and free from the dominion of earthly powers. But that sin brought upon them death and subjection, and through it the tablets were broken and many thousands were slain. All this came from their association with the "mixed multitude"; and it was on their account that they are called here not "children of Israel", nor "Israel", nor "my people", but simply "the people". As for the expression in the same verse, "And the *children of Israel* went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt", this refers to the period before the "mixed multitude" joined them.' R. Jose objected that at the Red Sea Moses said to the Israelites, "the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day ye shall see them again no more" (Ex. XIV, 13), and yet according to R. Isaac's interpretation they saw the "mixed multitude" every day. To this R. Judah answered that the "mixed multitude" were not Egyptians, but members of other

peoples living in Egypt. Moreover, they had all been circumcised, and therefore would not in any case be called Egyptians. They were accepted as proselytes on the authority of Moses; for which reason [46a] it says in a later passage, "Go, get thee down, for *thy people* which thou hast brought out of Egypt have corrupted themselves" (Ex. XXXII, 7).'

AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WENT UP ARMED (*ḥamushim*). This signifies that the "mixed multitude" numbered one in every five (*ḥamishah*). According to R. Jose, for every five pure Israelites there was one who belonged to the mixed multitude. R. Judah said one in fifty (*ḥamishim*). R. Simeon saw in the word *ḥamushim* an allusion to the "Jubilee" which led them out of Egypt. For the same reason, fifty days had to pass before the Israelites received the Torah on Mount Sinai, since the Torah also emanated from that same region of the "Jubilee".

AND MOSES TOOK THE BONES OF JOSEPH WITH HIM. Why did Moses do this rather than anyone else? Because Joseph was the leader in the descent into exile. Moreover, this was a sign of redemption to him, for Joseph "had strictly sworn the children of Israel" concerning it, the meaning of which has already been explained in another connection. Blessed be Moses, who, when the children of Israel were busy borrowing jewels from the Egyptians, saw to the fulfilment of the pledge given to Joseph! Some say that Joseph's coffin had been in the river Nile and Moses removed it from there by the power of the Holy Name; and that he also said: "Joseph, arise! The time of the redemption of Israel has arrived!" Some say that his body was buried among the kings of Egypt, and had to be removed from there. Others, again, hold that his body was put into the Nile in order that the Egyptians should not worship him as a god, and that Serah, the daughter of Asher, showed Moses the exact spot where it lay.[1]

AND THE LORD WENT BEFORE THEM BY DAY. R. Jose discoursed upon the verse: *To the chief musician, upon the hind*

[1] Cf. Midrash, Deut. Rabbah XI.

of the morning (Ps. XXII, 1). 'Great', he said, 'is the love which the Holy One, blessed be He, has lavished upon the Torah, in that all those who devote themselves to her are blessed for her sake. He who studies her diligently shall find favour in the upper and lower spheres, and the Holy One shall hearken to the words of such a one, and never leave him in this world or the world to come. The Torah must, however, be studied by day and by night, as Moses said to Joshua: "Thou shalt meditate therein day and night" (Joshua I, 8), and as it also says, "My covenant (shall be with thee) night and day" (Jer. XXXIII, 20). The night must be added to the day in order that the Holy Name may be with him in harmony and perfection. And as the day is not complete without the night, so the study of the Torah is not complete unless it is carried on by night as well as by day. The word "night" is commonly taken to include those evening hours which fall before midnight; but the real night only begins with the actual stroke of midnight, for at that moment the Holy One, blessed be He, enters the Garden of Eden in order to have joyous communion with the righteous. For this reason it behoves the pious man to rise also at that time, for then the Holy One and all the righteous in the Garden listen to his voice, as it is written, "Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice" (S.S. VIII, 3), and we refer this to the Community of Israel when she extols the Holy One by studying the Torah at night. Happy he who joins her in this praise! When morning dawns the Community of Israel still rejoices in her Lord, and He extends the sceptre of His grace over her and over every individual who participates in her rejoicings and communion with Him. It is on this account that the Community of Israel is known as "the hind of the morning".' Said R. Simeon: 'When the dawn is about to break the sky darkens: at that moment the Spouse enters her husband's chamber. On the other hand, when the sun is about to set, it grows light for an instant, and then night comes, and the light is removed, and all the gates are closed; asses begin to bray, and dogs bark. But with the midnight the King arises, and the Matrona sings, and the King draws nigh to the

gate of the Palace, and knocks thereon, crying, "Open unto me, my sister, my love!" (S.S. V, 2), and He enters in, and has joyous communion with the souls of the righteous. Then is he indeed blessed who at that moment shall arise to study the Torah. For all those who dwell in the palace of the Matrona arise at that time to sing praises to the King, but the praise which ascends from this far-away world is the most pleasing of all to the Holy One. When the night passes and the dawn breaks, at that moment when the sky is darkened, the King and the Shekinah unite in joy, and He reveals celestial and hidden beauties to Her and all Her train, and presents them all with gifts. Blessed indeed is he who is numbered among them!'

AND THE LORD WALKED BEFORE THEM BY DAY. The expression "and the Lord" means the Holy One, blessed be He, and His Council. [46b] 'This illustrates what we have been taught,' said R. Isaac, 'namely, that the Patriarchs were the Shekinah's chariot. Abraham is indicated by the words "walked before them by day"; Isaac by "in a pillar of cloud"; Jacob by "to lead them the way"; and David by the words "by night in a pillar of fire"; and all these four formed a supernal holy Chariot, for the assistance and guardianship of Israel, to the end that she might walk in harmony, completeness and peace, and that the Fathers might behold the redemption of their children.

TO GO BY DAY AND BY NIGHT. Why had the children of Israel thus to go by night as well as by day like a pack of runaways? Had they not the Holy One Himself to protect and to lead them? The reason, however, was in order that the harmony of the whole (i.e. of the divine attributes of Mercy and Justice, symbolized by day and night) might be manifested in them. As for the "pillar of fire", it rose up at night to give light on either side, and it was as a beacon unto the Egyptians, luring them on to pursue, in order that the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, might be glorified in their overthrow. Also, it was to mislead the Egyptians into thinking that it was all a mere accident. Therefore it was

that they went day and night.' Said R. Abba: 'Blessed are the Israelites for that the Holy One brought them out from Egypt in order that they might be His portion and possession! Observe that Israel gained freedom from the side of the "Jubilee"; since it shall be thus once again in the future time, as it is written, "And it shall come to pass in that day that the great trumpet shall be blown" (Isa. XXVII, 13). Moreover, on account of that supernal "Jubilee" they waited fifty days before receiving the Torah on Mount Sinai. And as they walked by day so they also walked by night, so that the days should be perfect; and still they went in ease and comfort. When they received the Law fifty days had passed, each consisting of day and night, and each being but the half of one whole. Thus, after they had journeyed for fifty complete days, the light of the fifty days of the Jubilee shone upon them.'

AND IT WAS TOLD THE KING OF EGYPT. . . . By whom was it told? According to R. Isaac, the magicians, who were Pharaoh's ministers, discovered by their dark arts that the Israelites walked both by day and by night, and concluded that they were running away, the more so as they also observed that they did not take the direct route, but went by a devious way, as it says, "And they returned and encamped before Pi-Hahiroth".

AND HE TOOK SIX HUNDRED CHOSEN CHARIOTS. R. Jose said that this number corresponded to the number of the Israelites who went on foot—six hundred thousand footmen (Ex. XII, 37). The "chosen chariots" were meant as a counterpart to the fighting men, who formed the flower of Israel, while "all the chariots of Egypt" corresponded to the "little ones" of the Israelites. Pharaoh acted entirely on the advice of his sorcerers and magicians. The word "warriors" (*shalishim*, from *shelishi*, third) signifies that every chariot contained three warriors, and this was planned with a deep purpose, that they might correspond to the Supernal grades (Sephiroth), which also go in threes (viz. right, left, and intermediary). According to R. Isaac, however, *shalishim*

means simply "supervisors", as in the Aramaic translation (Targum). R. Hiya illustrated from the verse, "The Lord shall punish the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth" (Isa. XXIV, 21). 'When the Holy One', he said, 'shows favour unto the celestial representatives of a nation, granting them dominion and power, He deals similarly with the earthly nation which they represent; and when He lessens His favour and diminishes their power above, He does likewise below.' [47a]

AND PHARAOH DREW NEAR. Said R. Jose: 'It has been pointed out that the word *hikriv* (drew near, lit. brought near) is in the causative form, signifying that he brought the Israelites *near* to God by repentance. So the Scripture says elsewhere, "O Lord, they have visited thee in trouble, they have poured out prayer when thy chastisement was upon them" (Isa. XXVI, 16), i.e. Israel do not turn to the Almighty when they are at ease, but only when they are "in trouble"; when He chastises them, then "they pour out prayer". They are like the dove in the story which took refuge from a hawk in the cleft of a rock and found a serpent there. They drew nigh unto the sea; but when they beheld how stormy it was, and how its waves roared and broke, fear overtook them. Then they looked back, and lo! there was Pharaoh with all his hosts and their manifold weapons! Their fear increased at this sight, and their terror knew no bounds. Then "they cried". Thus they came *near* to their heavenly Father, whose aid they invoked; and of this Pharaoh was indirectly the cause.'

AND MOSES SAID UNTO THE PEOPLE, FEAR YE NOT, STAND STILL AND SEE THE SALVATION OF THE LORD. Said R. Simeon: 'Blessed were the Israelites to have a shepherd like Moses! It is written: "Then he remembered the days of old, Moses his people" (Isa. LXIII, 11). This indicates that Moses was counted as of equal importance before the Lord with the whole people, and that the people's shepherd does not merely *represent* them, but actually *is himself* the people. If he is worthy, then is the whole people likewise

worthy; and if he be not so, then is the whole people punished for his guilt, as we have shown on another occasion. "Stand still and see", i.e. "you have no occasion to fight, the Lord shall fight for you and ye shall hold your peace". On that night the Holy One gathered together His whole celestial Family to judge Israel, and had it not been for the merit and intercession of their ancestors they would not have been left unscathed.' R. Judah said: 'The merit of Jacob protected them from punishment, as it says, "If it were not for the Lord who was on our side, may Israel say" (Ps. CXXIV, 2), where the reference is to the patriarch Israel.'

THE LORD SHALL FIGHT FOR YOU AND YE SHALL HOLD YOUR PEACE. R. Abba discoursed here on the verse: *If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day*" (Isa. LVIII, 13). He said: 'Blessed are the Israelites that of all nations the Holy One singled them out for fellowship with Him and gave them, out of love, the Torah and the Sabbath! The Sabbath, the holiest of days, the most restful, the most joyous! The Sabbath, which is equal in significance to the whole Torah, so that he who keeps the Sabbath keeps, as it were, the whole Torah. "And call the Sabbath a delight" (*Ibid.*): a delight for the soul, and a delight for the body; a delight for those who are above, and a delight for those that are below. "And call the Sabbath." Call it, invite it, as one invites an honoured guest and prepares everything bounteously and concentrates one's attention on him, [47b] "not doing one's own ways, nor finding one's own pleasure, nor speaking (profane) words" (*Ibid.*). For every word that man speaks, whether it be good or bad, causes a vibration in the higher spheres, and he who disturbs the Sabbath joy by uttering profane words causes a blemish in the holy day. When one has been invited to the king's banquet he would commit a great offence against the king if he were to neglect him in order to converse with some other person: the Sabbath is such a banquet. The week days must be devoted to all needful occupations, with their corresponding vibrations above; on the Sabbath, however, the vibration must be caused entirely by religious acts and

words, by the sanctification of the day. Here, however, when Pharaoh was about to start the battle against Israel, the Holy One did not wish His people to start any movement from below, because the awakening was to come from above, namely, from their ancestors, the Patriarchs, whose meritorious intercessions stood before the Holy One. Hence Moses said: "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace", which means, "ye need not utter a word to cause a vibration above: the initiative has already come from there." It may be noted that the initials of the words *Yhvh yilaḥem lakem*—"the Lord shall fight for you"—make a part of the Holy Name (of the seventy-two letters), as the members of the Fellowship have pointed out.'

R. Jose and R. Judah were once walking together. Said R. Jose: 'We have been taught that the Name YHVH in every connection signifies mercy; even when it is related to war and judgement, the judgement is executed in mercy; but here we read, "YHVH shall fight for you", and yet the attribute of mercy was not manifested at all in the Egyptians' defeat, for "there remained not so much as one of them" (v. 28).' R. Judah replied by quoting a remark of R. Simeon on this subject, showing that here also mercy and kindness was manifested (in the execution of judgement). For when the Egyptians were drowned, the sea spat them out, while the earth refused to take in the bodies, until the Holy One, in order not to deprive them of the last honour, stretched out to the earth His right hand and commanded her to receive them, as is indicated by the words, "Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them" (XV, 12). Therefore the Israelites had to be silent, for had they caused an awakening from below, it was not the attribute of Mercy that they would have awakened, and so judgement would have been executed on the Egyptians without mercy, and the heavenly design would have been frustrated.' Said R. Jose: 'What of the verse: "And YHVH will come out and fight against those nations" (Zech. XIV, 3)?' R. Judah replied: 'There also mercy will be shown in that God will allow them to die without suffering. In fact, this Name always signifies judgement in mercy, except in one connection,

namely the war of the future, of which it says: "The Lord shall go forth as a giant . . . like a man of war" (Isa. XLII, 13). But even here all that is meant is that the judgement will be exceptionally severe, and mercy will still be fused with it: the particle "*ke*" (like) has a qualifying effect, showing that the Lord is only *compared* to a "giant" and to a "man of war"; and although He will exercise judgement, He will have mercy on those whom He created.'

AND THE LORD SAID UNTO MOSES, WHEREFORE CRIEST THOU UNTO ME? The significance of this question has been dealt with in the Book of Concealed Mystery, and the esoteric interpretation thereof belongs there. R. Judah connected this verse with the story of Jonah. 'We read there', he said, 'that "the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah" (Jonah III, 1). Now the word *minah* (prepared) means strictly "to allot as a portion", as, for instance, when it says, "the king allotted them a daily provision" (Dan. I, 5); therefore in this case it would seem more appropriate [48a] to have said "and the Lord apportioned Jonah to the fish" than that the fish was prepared for Jonah. However, the fact is that the fish was a great boon to Jonah; for, once inside it, he was guarded from all the other fishes. Further, he beheld wondrous things there. He saw in the fish's belly an open space like unto the halls of a palace, and the two eyes of the fish shining like the sun at noon. Inside was a precious stone which illumined all around, and made visible to him all the wonders of the deep. If this was so, it may be asked, why does it say that he "called out of his affliction" (*Ibid.* II, 2), seeing that he was so well situated? The answer is, as R. Eleazar has told us, that when God saw Jonah enjoying himself with the sight, He said, "Was it for this that I brought thee in here", and straightway killed the fish. Then all the other fishes came round it and gnawed at its carcase from all sides so that Jonah found himself in dire straits, and it was then that he prayed "from out of the belly of sheol", to wit, of the dead fish. And the Holy One hearkened unto his prayer and brought the fish to life again, and lo! it arose from the sea and came up on to the land before the eyes of

all, and it vomited out Jonah, and all saw the power of the Almighty. Now it is written, "And Jonah prayed unto the Lord *his* God out of the fish's belly"; i.e. to the grade of the Deity to which he was attached. Similarly here: "And the Lord said unto Moses: Why criest thou *unto me?*" (as much as to say, it is time to address a higher grade, viz. the Ancient of Days). And this is the significance of the words, "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward", i.e. from the grade they are at present addressing to a higher one.'

BUT LIFT THOU UP THY ROD, AND STRETCH OUT THINE HAND OVER THE SEA, AND DIVIDE IT. This signifies: "Lift up thy rod, on which is engraved the Holy Name; stretch out thine hand with the side bearing this Holy Name, so that the waters, beholding it, may flee before the power that is in its letters. The other side of the rod will be used for other ends." Said R. Eleazar: 'How is it that the rod is termed sometimes "the rod of God" and sometimes "the rod of Moses"?' R. Simeon replied: 'In the book of R. Hamnuna the ancient it is rightly remarked that the two names are equivalent, the purpose of the rod in either case being to stir up the powers of *Geburah* (Might, or Judgement). "Thine hand" indicates the Left Hand, which is that connected with *Geburah*. Woe', R. Simeon continued, 'unto those who are deaf to the lessons of the Torah, which it proclaims to them every day. Water originates from the side of *Geburah* and issues thence. Now, therefore, that God desired to *dry up* the water, why did He bid Moses use his left hand? The answer is that Moses was bidden to "lift up his staff" to dry the waters, and to "stretch forth his hand" to bring them back on the Egyptians, through the agency of *Geburah*—the two operations being distinct. What is called here "sea" is later called "deeps" (Ex. XV, 8). This shows that God performed one miracle within another: causing the deeps to congeal in the heart of the sea, so that "the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea" (XV 8, 19).' [48b]

AND HE TOOK OFF THEIR CHARIOT WHEELS THAT

THEY DRAVE THEM HEAVILY. R. Simeon discoursed on the verse: *Now I beheld the living creatures* (*Hayoth*), *and behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces* (Ezek. I, 15). 'This verse', he said, 'we can explain as follows. The Holy One reveals His dominion and power in all things, a power which shall never be shaken. He manifested His power in the Patriarchs, and particularly in Jacob. Now Jacob is united with the Tree of Life, over which death has no dominion, since in it all life is contained, emanating from it unto all those who are in perfect union with it. For this reason Jacob did not really die. He died in a physical sense when "he gathered up his feet into the bed" (Gen. XLIX, 33), which bed is mysteriously called "the bed of Solomon" (S.S. III, 7), the bed of the "strange woman" whose "feet go down to death" (Prov. V, 5). But of all the Fathers the Holy One chose Jacob to be the centre of perfection and fulfilment, as it is written: "Jacob whom I have chosen" (Isa. XLI, 8). Mark also this! All the supernal hosts with their cohorts and lightful chariots of celestial speed are joined one to another, grade to grade, the lower to the higher, each to its counterpart; and above them all a holy "Living being" (*Hayah*) (cf. Ezek. I) is set, and all those myriads of armies move and rest according to its will and direction. This is that Living Creature to which all *Hayoth* are linked, as each is also to each, all moving and swimming in the sea, concerning which it is written: "This is the great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts" (Ps. CIV, 25). Now, when the wheels of the sea arise all the boats which sail thereon do heave and toss, and air and waters are mightily stirred so that a great storm arises; and the fishes that dwell in the depths of the sea are whirled about by the violence of the tempest, and are buffeted towards the four corners of the earth, some to the east, and some to the west, some to the north, and some to the south; and there they are caught by the nets of fishermen, as they reach the ocean's shallower depths, where the sands of the shore slope down to meet the breakers of that sea. At that time the boats steer no course, either certain or uncharted, but only toss and heave in one place. At last a swift but subtle

current arises amid the tumult of the stormy waters, and gradually their strife is stilled and peace descends upon the waves; then the boats steer a straight course for their bourne, and swerve not nor falter; concerning which it is written: "There go the ships; there is that Leviathan whom thou hast made to play therein" (*Ibid.* V, 26). And all the fishes of the sea gather to their places, and all the creatures rejoice over it and the *Hayoth* of the supernal fields, as it is written: "And all the beasts of the field play there" (Job XL, 20). Come and see! The likeness of that which is above is that which is below, and what is below is also in the sea, and the likeness of that which is above is that which is in the supernal sea, and what is below is also in the lower sea. As the higher sea has length and width and head and arms and hair and a body, so also the lower sea.' Said R. Simeon: 'How many chariots there are whose wheels run speedily, carrying the framework upon them without delay! Yet here "God made him drive heavily". We interpret these words of the heavenly chariot, which was the guardian angel of Egypt, and which then was rendered imperfect. There were many others dependent on this one, and when it lost its power the lower chariots lost their power, as it is written: "Behold, I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings; even Pharaoh and all them that trust [49a] in him" (Jer. XLVI, 25). At that time Egypt's Principality was superior to that of all other nations, but as soon as its power was broken, the power of all the other nations was also broken, as it is written: "Then the dukes of Edom were amazed, the mighty men of Moab, trembling took hold upon them . . ." (Ex. XV, 15). For they were all in Egypt's vassalage, and were linked with Egypt and were dependent on her for their existence, and therefore when they heard the mighty works of the Holy One in Egypt, they lost courage, and fear and trembling fell upon them. Verily, as soon as Egypt's power was broken above, the power of all those who were joined to her was also broken. Therefore it says: "and removed the *wheel* (*ofan*) of his chariots, not "wheels", signifying that when this was removed all the chariots dependent on it were unable to proceed. Happy are

the Israelites who are linked to the Holy One who chose them to be His portion: "Ye who cleave to the Lord your God, ye are all alive to-day" (Deut. IV, 4). He brought them forth from the holy seed in order that they might be His portion, and therefore He gave them His Torah, the holy one, the supernal one, which was hidden for two thousand years before the creation of the world. He gave it to them out of love, so that they may cleave to it. Now all the supernal hosts and chariots are linked to one another, grades to grades, lower to higher, wheels within wheels: and a holy *Hayah* is over them all, and all the multitudinous hosts and powers are under her direction and control; when she moves they move, when she rests they rest. Therefore when the Holy One, blessed be He, desired to bring the hosts of Pharaoh down even unto the depths, He first removed that supernal influence which led and directed all the other powers and principalities. When that guardian was removed the others could not continue on their way, and as soon as their power was removed the guardian of Egypt lost his power as well, and had to pass through the Fiery Stream, and thus the dominion of Egypt came to nought. Therefore the Egyptians said: "Let us flee from the face of Israel" (v. 25).'

Said R. Isaac: 'In that hour when the Israelites drew near to the sea, the Holy One summoned unto Him the great angel appointed over the sea, and said: "When I created this My world I appointed thee over the sea, making at the same time a pact with the waters that they should divide for My children in their time of need. Now their hour of trial is come, and they must cross the sea." Hence it says, "and the sea returned to his strength", the word "*leethano*" (his strength) suggesting "*lithnao*" (his compact). And when the Israelites reached the shore and there beheld the waves of the sea heaving and tossing, and lifting up their eyes beheld so close behind them Pharaoh and all his hosts, they were grievously affrighted, therefore crying out unto the Lord. "Also the sea saw and fled" (Ps. CXIV, 3). What saw it, and why did it flee? It saw the coffin of Joseph, the man who "fled and went outside" (Gen. XXXIX, 12). We likewise read

that the Egyptians said "Let us flee". Why said they so? Because they suddenly perceived the land of Egypt as it were on fire.'

R. Ḥiya and R. Jose were once walking in the desert. Said R. Ḥiya to R. Jose: 'Let me tell you something. When the Holy One, blessed be He, wishes to remove a certain nation from its dominion on earth, He first removes or casts down its celestial representative; but not before another such is appointed in the first one's stead, in order that there should be no break in their service in heaven, [49b] as it is written: "He giveth it (the kingdom) to whomsoever he will" (Dan. IV, 14).' 'Quite so!' rejoined R. Jose. Then he took up the thread of their discourse thus: "It is written: *O Lord our God, how glorious is thy name over all the earth, who hast set* (asher tenah) *thy glory above the heavens* (Ps. VIII, 2). The words "*asher tenah*" (lit. which set) in the second half of the sentence are peculiar; we should expect either *asher natata* (which Thou hast set), or simply *tenah* (imperative, set) without the "*asher*" (which, who). In reality, however, this passage contains the mystery of the deepest "river" which flows out of Paradise; and the "*asher*" is a reference to "*Ehye asher ehye*"—"I shall be that which I shall be"; and of this river David prayed that it should manifest itself above the heavens, in order that all the worlds might be united in one perfection and harmony of joy, and the Matrona (the Shekinah) be crowned by the King, and all the strength of the heathen nations be made as nought, and their dominion be ended, and their greatness be cast down, and all their power and glory vanish, that every one who cleaves unto the Shekinah should lift up his head, perceiving the glory of the Lord and dwelling in the peace of His Kingdom.'

Whilst the two were thus conversing, they saw a man approaching, who carried a bundle on his shoulders. On perceiving him R. Ḥiya exclaimed: 'Let us hurry on, since this man may be a heathen, or an ignoramus, and it would be wrong for us to travel in his company.' R. Jose, however, said: 'Nay, rather let us sit down here and wait till he comes up with us, since he may be a great and wise man.' So they

waited by the roadside. After some time the stranger drew near: when he reached them he paused and addressed them, saying: 'The way by which you are going is dangerous, except for a large company together. I know of a different way which would be better for you, and I feel it incumbent on me to tell you so as not to transgress the commandment: "Thou shalt not put a stumbling block before the blind" (Lev. XIX, 14), for you are, as it were, indeed blind in regard to this road and its danger, and may risk your lives.' Said R. Jose: 'Blessed be the Merciful One for causing us to wait here till thou camest by!' So they joined him, and he told them not to speak till they should have left the spot. He then led them by a different road. When they were at a safe distance from the place where they had halted he said: 'Once on a time two priests, one a scholar and the other an ignoramus, passed along that road; and the latter rose against the former and killed him. Since that time anyone who passes the spot where the crime was committed is in danger of his life, for all the brigands and felons that dwell among the mountains do congregate there, and lie in wait for passers by, and fall upon all that venture by that way, and rob and kill them: and the Holy One requires the blood of that priest every day.'

The stranger then began to expound the verse: *As yet shall he (Sanherib) remain in Nob that day, he shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion* (Isa. X, 32). He said: 'This passage has already been interpreted by the masters of the academy, but I shall give you an esoteric interpretation which I have learnt. "That day." Which day? Now it is written: "And Aaron took Elisheba the daughter of Aminadab to wife" (Ex. VI, 23). This, allegorically interpreted, refers to the Community of Israel, in which Aaron is the "friend of the Bride", to prepare the house, to serve her, to lead her to the King, in order that she may unite herself with him. From that time every priest who ministered in the Sanctuary had the same office as Aaron (to unite Israel with God). Achimelech was a great high priest, and all the priests who ministered under him were "friends of the Matrona", and when they were killed by king Saul the Matrona remained alone without her friend,

and there was none to minister to her, to prepare her "house", and to lead her to the union with the King. Hence, from that day she passed to the "Left Side", and it has ever been lying in wait to fall upon the world. It killed Saul and his sons, and the kingship passed from his line, and thousands and myriads of Israelites perished. And the guilt of that act hung over Israel until Sennacherib came and stirred it up again at Nob, the city of priests, the city of Achimelech. This is "the day—in Nob", the fateful day, when the Community of Israel lost her bridal "friend", when she remained without the "Right Hand" to join with the "Left", for the priest belongs to the Right Hand. "Gibea of Saul is fled" (*Ibid.*): Saul is mentioned because he killed the priests and was the cause of the Right Hand being uprooted from the world. So also here: since that priest was killed, no one dares pass this spot, lest he endanger his life.' Said R. Jose to R. Ḥiya: 'Did I not say, perhaps he is a great man?' Then he applied to him the words, "Blessed be the man that findeth wisdom and the man that getteth understanding" (Prov. III, 13), saying: 'Such are [50a] we who found thee and acquired from thee a word of wisdom and were inspired with understanding to wait for thee! We are of those for whom the Holy One prepares a present when they are journeying, to wit, the manifestation of the Shekinah, as it says: "The path of the righteous is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day" (*Ibid.* IV, 18).'

So they walked on. Then the man began to give an exposition of the verse: "A psalm of David. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell there" (Ps. XXIV, 1, 2). 'Sometimes', he said, 'the title is "of David a psalm", and sometimes "a psalm of David". What is the difference? "Of David a psalm" signifies, as here, that David sang concerning the Community of Israel; but "a psalm of David" signifies that he sang concerning himself. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" refers to the Community of Israel and all the multitudes who are attached to her and are called "fulness". "The world and they that dwell therein" refers to the lower world called *tebel*, which is under the ægis of Judgement, as it is

written: "He will judge the world (*tebel*) in righteousness" (*Ibid.* IX, 9). Whether as individuals, or nations, or the whole world, they are all linked to this sphere of judgement. Behold, Pharaoh imbibed from that source, so that he and his whole people perished. As soon as this judgement was awakened against him his celestial guardian was removed from his dominion, shaken in his power, and all whom he represented on earth fell with him. This is the significance of the words, "and he took off their chariots' wheel", to wit, He annulled the power of their supernal guardian, and the result was that all the Egyptians died in the sea. Why in the sea? Because the supernal "sea" was roused against them and they were delivered into its hands.' Said R. Hiya: 'Quite so. And therefore it says: "His chosen captains also were drowned in the sea of Suph" (the Red Sea), for "*Suph*" suggests "*soph*", an end, namely the end of the grades of the supernal powers.' Said R. Hiya: 'The expression "that they drave them heavily" (*bi-kebeduth*), in this verse, is a proof that man receives measure for measure. Pharaoh made his heart "heavy" (*kabed*), and the Holy One drave him "heavily".'

AND THE EGYPTIANS (*Miẓraim*) SAID, LET US FLEE FROM THE FACE OF ISRAEL. *Miẓraim* here signifies the celestial chief who was in charge of Egypt. Said R. Jose: 'This presents a difficulty. For inasmuch as he was already removed from his dominion, how could he pursue the Israelites? But the truth is that in this sentence *Miẓraim* signifies the Egyptians of this world, but in the second half of the verse, "for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians", the term *Miẓraim* refers to their chieftain on high. The verse thus amounts to saying that as their power was broken on high, so was their power broken below, and when the Egyptians perceived the overthrow of their celestial might and power, they said: "Let us flee from the face of Israel". Observe that when the Community of Israel bestirs itself, there is a stirring among all the legions attached to it, both on high and below, Israel rising above them all. For Israel derive their force from the body of the Tree of

Life, and it is for this reason that Israel are attached to that Tree more closely than the idolatrous nations. And when they bestir themselves the power of all those who have sway over them is shattered. The celestial chieftain of Egypt oppressed Israel with all manner of hardship, but after he was crushed the lower kings were crushed with him. Hence the words of Scripture, "for the Lord fighteth *them* in Egypt", alluding to the celestial chieftains.' [50b]

R. Hiya applied to the Community of Israel the verse: "She is like the merchant's ship; she bringeth her food from afar" (Prov. XXXI, 14). 'The Community of Israel', he said, 'indeed brings her salvation from afar, to wit, from a certain grade that rests upon her, through which are transmitted all the streams that flow into the sea. To this grade they return, to be emptied into the sea once more, so that there should be a perpetual flow, as it says, "to the place whence the rivers go, there they return to go" (Eccl. I, 7), once more to the sea. The name of this grade is *Ẓaddik*.' R. Isaac said: 'There is still a higher sphere in which is contained and consummated the love-union of the Divine aspects which are never thereafter separated.' R. Judah asked: 'Who is worthy to know of it?' R. Isaac replied: 'He who has a portion in the world to come.'

Said R. Abba: 'How many thousands, how many myriads, of celestial cohorts surround the Holy One and follow in His train! Princes of supernal countenances are there, and beings full of eyes; lords of the sharp weapons, lords of the piercing cry, lords of the heralding trumpet, lords of mercy, lords of judgement; and above them the Lord has appointed the Matrona to minister before Him in the Palace. She for her own bodyguard has armed hosts of sixty different degrees. Holding their swords, they stand around Her. They come and go, entering and departing again on the errands of their Master. Each with his six wings outspread they circle the world in swift and silent flight. Before each of them coals of fire burn. Their garments are woven of flames from a bright and burning fire. A sharp flaming sword also is at the shoulder of each to guard [51a] Her. Concerning these swords it is written: "The flaming sword which turned

every way to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. III, 23). Now, what is "the way of the Tree of Life"? This is the great Matrona who is the way to the great and mighty Tree of Life. Concerning this it is written: "Behold the bed which is Solomon's; the three score valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel" (S.S. III, 7), namely, the Supernal Israel. "They all hold swords" (*Ibid.* 8), and when the Matrona moves they all move with her, as it is written: "and the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them" (Ex. XIV, 19). Is, then, the Shekinah called "the angel of the Lord"? Assuredly! For thus said R. Simeon: "The Holy One prepared for Himself a holy Palace, a supernal Palace, a holy City, a supernal City, which is called 'Jerusalem, the holy city'. He who wishes to see the King, must enter through this holy City and thence take his way to the King: 'this is the gate of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter' (Ps. CXVIII, 20)." Every message which the King wishes to send out is sent through the Matrona, and, conversely, every message sent from the lower spheres to the King must first reach the Matrona, and from her it goes to the King. Thus the Matrona is the messenger between the upper regions and the lower. For this reason she is called "the angel (messenger) of God". It may be asked, is it consonant with the dignity of the King that the Matrona should declare war for him and receive petitions to him? The following parable may explain. A king married a noble lady, whose worth he esteemed so highly that in comparison with her he regarded all other women as a mere vulgar herd. "What shall I do to honour her?" he thought. "I will give her full control over the palace and over my whole household!" So he made a proclamation that all the king's business should pass through the hands of the queen. He also handed over to her all the weapons of war, all his military advisers and generals, all his regalia, and indeed all his treasures of every sort, and said: "From now anyone who wishes to speak to me must first make known his suit unto the queen." Similarly, the Holy One, blessed be He, out of His great love for the Community of Israel (represented by the Shekinah) has entrusted

everything to her (i.e. the Shekinah), proclaiming all the other nations to be of no account in comparison with her. "There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number; but my dove, my undefiled is but one" (S.S. VI, 8, 9). He resolved that His whole household be given into her keeping, and delivered to her all his armoury, all the lances, all the swords, all the bows, all the arrows, all the spears, all the catapults, all the citadels, and all weapons of warfare, the "sixty valiant men, the valiant of Israel". He said: "From now let My warfare be entrusted to Thee; My weapons, My fighters! From now Thou must guard them all. From now, he who wishes to speak to Me must first make known his concerns to Thee!" Hence "the angel of God went behind them." Why behind them? In order to face all the grades of fighting principalities and powers, all the hosts of celestial representatives of the enemy who had come to fight against Israel. For, as we have learnt, at that hour the greatest prince appointed to represent Egypt in the supernal spheres arrived and with him six hundred chariots, directed by six hundred angelic adversaries of Israel. That prince was Samael. [51b] When did the Holy One requite him? In the battle of Sisera, when He rooted out all those chariots and delivered them unto the Matrona, as it is written, in the Song of Deborah: "The river Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon" (Jud. V, 21). And in the future all of them shall be delivered up, as it says: "Who is this that cometh from Edom . . .?" (Isa. LXIII, 1). And this indeed is the significance of the words: "And he went behind them"—that the Shekinah will uproot them all at the end of days.'

AND THE PILLAR OF THE CLOUD REMOVED FROM BEFORE THEM AND STOOD BEHIND THEM. What was this pillar of cloud? R. Jose said that it was the cloud which is always seen with the Shekinah, the cloud into which Moses entered (Ex. XXIV, 18). R. Abba said that it was that which supports the *Ẓaddik*, coming from the side of Grace (*Ḥesed*), wherefore it went by day, while there was another cloud which went by night and was called "pillar of fire".' R. Simeon

said that the pillar of cloud by day represented Abraham (Mercy), and the pillar of fire by night, Isaac (Severity), both attributes being united in the Shekinah, through the agency of the grade mentioned by R. Abba. 'The word "removed", in this sentence', he said, 'implies that there was a movement from Grace to Severity, for the time had arrived for the Holy One to clothe Himself with judgement.' R. Simeon further said that the "Moon"—the Shekinah—was then in her fulness and perfection, manifesting both attributes and representing in herself seventy-two holy Names according to the threefold order.[1] In virtue of the first order of letters, she clothed herself with the garment of Grace, shining with the resplendence of the light which the Supernal Father caused to shine for her; in virtue of the second she adorned herself with the implements of war, expressing Severity, and sixty "whips" of fire, emanating from the Supernal Mother. The third order of the letters represents Her in garments of purple, the adornment of the Holy Supernal Father, designated "Beauty" (*Tiphereth*), which is communicated to the Holy Son (i.e. the letter *Vau* in the Tetragrammaton) in seventy crowns from the side of the Father (*Yod*) and of the Mother (*Hé*). We have been taught that from the side of Grace there are seventy-two witnesses; from the side of Severity, seventy-two scribes; from the side of Beauty, seventy-two colours of glory. In the transcendent sphere they are all linked one to the other, forming the Holy Name, the mystery of the Divine Chariot. Here (in the three verses, Ex. XIV, 19–21) are inscribed the patriarchs in unison, forming the Holy Name of seventy-two letters[2] of the three verses. And this is the order of their combination: the first verse (19) is to be written straight, for all its initial letters are found in *Hesed;* the second verse (20) is to be written backward, for all its second letters are found in *Geburah;*

[1] Of the letters of the three verses, Ex. XIV, 19–21, containing the mysterious Divine Name of seventy-two letters, and producing, when combined according to certain rules, no less than seventy-two other distinct names.

[2] Each of these verses in the original contains seventy-two letters—a fact to which the Cabbalists attached a mystic significance.

in this way Judgement may be roused, with all those powers that emanate from the left side. The letters of the third verse when written out show forth the colours which crown the Holy King; and all these letters are united in Him, and He is crowned with His diadems in the proper manner, like a king fully crowned. Here is the Holy Name engraved in seventy-two letters, which are crowned with the Fathers who are the supernal Holy Chariot. Should the question arise, why the third group is not to be written partly straightforward and partly backwards, so as to be in touch with both sides (as *Tifereth* is in touch with both *Ḥesed* and *Geburah*), we must picture a king who combines in himself the balance and harmony of all attributes, and therefore his countenance always shines like the sun, and he is serene because of his wholeness and perfection; but when he judges, he can condemn as well as acquit. A fool, seeing that the king's countenance is bright, thinks that there is nothing to be afraid of; but a wise man says to himself, "although the king's countenance shines, it is because he is perfect and combines benevolence with justice, and in that brightness judgement [52a] is hidden, and therefore I must be careful". The Holy One is such a king. R. Judah found this idea expressed in the words: "I, the Lord, have not changed" (Mal. III, 6), meaning, "in Me all the attributes are harmoniously combined, the two aspects of mercy and severity are one in Me."

Said R. Simeon: 'Eleazar my son, observe this. When the Holy Ancient illumines the King, He crowns Him with supernal holy crowns. When these reach Him the Fathers are crowned, and there is completeness. Then the Matrona, participating in this celestial procession, is crowned by them all and is endowed with the power issuing from all of them.'

Said R. Isaac: 'When the Israelites encamped by the sea they saw many hosts, [52b] many armies, many camps, above and below, all united against Israel, and in their distress they prayed unto the Lord. The sea was stormy, its waves roared, behind them were all those hosts, all those armies of the Egyptians, and above them were all those celestial foes; and they began to cry to God. Then "the Lord said unto Moses:

Why criest thou unto me?" Then the Most Holy Ancient One appeared, and Mercy was manifested in all the upper worlds and all the lights were lit.' R. Isaac said: 'When the lights were lit the Sea began to exercise supreme judgements, and the upper and lower beings and powers were delivered unto its hands: hence the expression, "as difficult as the dividing of the Red Sea", because this depended on the Holy Ancient One.' Said R. Simeon: 'There is a certain hind on earth for which the Holy One, blessed be He, does many things: when she cries He hearkens to her afflictions and delivers her. When the world is in need of mercy, of water, she cries aloud and the Holy One answers her prayer. This is signified by the verse: "As the hind panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God" (Ps. XLII, 2). When she is about to bear a child and is in difficulty, she puts her head between her knees, and cries bitterly, and the Holy One sends a serpent which stings the place, and straightway deliverance comes to her.' R. Simeon, however, added: 'In this matter, "thou must not ask nor tempt the Lord".'

THUS THE LORD SAVED ISRAEL . . . AND ISRAEL SAW THE EGYPTIAN(S) DEAD. God showed them Egypt's celestial chieftain passing through the fiery stream, which was at the shore of the Ocean. "Dead" means that he was deprived of his power.

AND ISRAEL SAW THE GREAT HAND. . . . R. Hiya said: 'Here was the Supernal Hand completed with all its fingers, and the Left Hand was included—as in its perfect manifestation it must ever be—in the five fingers of the Right Hand. For we have been taught that all is included in this Right Hand and all depends upon it, as it is written, "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy" (*Ibid.* XV, 6).' R. Isaac said: 'No one ever hardened his heart against the Lord to the same degree as Pharaoh.' Said R. Jose: 'What of Sihon and Og? Were they not equally hardened?' R. Isaac answered, that whereas they hardened their hearts against

Israel, Pharaoh turned against the Lord Himself, although every day he witnessed His wonderful works. R. Judah said in the name of R. Isaac that Pharaoh was himself far wiser than all his sorcerers, yet by all the craft of his magic he could not divine there was a possibility of redemption for Israel: for he had knowledge of all the supernal sources inimical to the Israelites, but knew not that there was still another bond, the bond of Faith, which dominates all, and therefore he hardened his heart. According to R. Abba, it was the Holy Name which hardened Pharaoh's heart, for when Moses said to him: "Thus said YHVH" this very Name hardened his heart: "And YHVH hardened the heart of Pharaoh", for with all his wisdom he was not aware that this Name has power on earth, and said: "Who is YHVH?" R. Jose remarked that later he did say: "I have sinned to YHVH, YHVH is the righteous" (Ex. IX, 27). R. Ḥiya said: 'Job was thinking of Pharaoh when he said, "It is all one thing, therefore I said: He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked" (Job IX, 22). The words "it is all one thing" have an esoteric meaning. They refer to a certain Crown also referred to in the verse, "My love, my undefiled is but one" (VI, 9), and when God judges by means of this Crown, then "He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked", [53a] for the righteous are then punished for the guilt of the wicked, as it is written: "He said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough" (2 Sam. XXIV, 16). Job, when he said these words, was thinking of his own fate in being made to suffer with the Egyptians, but he did not finish his observation.' Said R. Ḥiya: 'When Job saw how he suffered, he said: "If this is so, then God makes no distinction between wicked and righteous. Pharaoh hardened his heart, and said, 'Who is YHVH, whose voice I should hear?', and he deserved punishment; but I have not done anything of the kind, why should I have such a fate?" For it was of him that it is written, "He that feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh . . ." (Ex. IX, 22).'

AND ISRAEL SAW THE GREAT HAND . . . AND THE PEOPLE FEARED THE LORD AND BELIEVED IN THE LORD AND

MOSES HIS SERVANT. First they are called "Israel" and then "people"; why? R. Judah said: 'Israel here refers to the patriarch Jacob, who, having come with his children to Egypt, and having suffered the bitterness of exile with them, now actually saw, although he was dead, the vengeance wrought by the Holy One, blessed be He. The Lord said unto him: "Arise and behold what I am doing for thy children's sake, how I am bringing them out of the clutches of a mighty people." This tallies with what R. Jesse said, that when the Israelites went into exile to Egypt, fear and trembling came over Jacob, so that God had to say to him: "Fear not to go down to Egypt" (Gen. XLVI, 3). Even then he was still afraid lest they might be exterminated there, so God reassured him by telling him that He Himself would go down with him to Egypt. Then he expressed his fear that he would not be buried with his fathers, nor witness the redemption of his children and the mighty works of the Lord. Then it was that the Holy One promised him "I will also surely bring thee up again", the emphatic expression indicating that he would be first brought up to be buried with his fathers and then again to witness Israel's redemption. R. Isaac found an added indication of this in the words: "Because he loved thy fathers . . . he brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt" (Deut. IV, 37); "in his sight" referring to Jacob. According to R. Hezekiah, however, "in his sight" (lit. countenance) refers to Abraham, of whom it says that he fell "on his countenance" when the Lord announced to him the birth of a son (Gen. XVII, 17), because it was hard for him to believe that a man of his age could be father to a newborn son, and the Holy One had to reassure him, revealing to him that he was destined to be the father of a great nation; and therefore, when the children of Israel went out from Egypt in their myriads, He let Abraham view their progress. R. Abba said that all the patriarchs were witnesses of the redemption. R. Eleazar finds this indicated in the above verse: "in his sight" referring to Jacob; "with his power" to Isaac; and "great" indicating Abraham. R. Simeon added that it is always for the sake of the patriarchs that the Lord redeems

Israel, as it is written: "And I shall remember my covenant with Jacob, also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham, and the land I shall remember" (Lev. XXVI, 42); the "land" representing King David, who completes a Chariot with the Patriarchs. [53b]

AND ISRAEL SAW THE GREAT HAND WHICH THE LORD DID UPON THE EGYPTIANS. They had seen how God had smitten the Egyptians even before this; but only now did they behold the Hand of full five fingers, which hand is called "great" because it includes other "five fingers", namely those of the Left Hand, as we have already made clear, and every "finger" symbolizes many Divine powers and signs, by means of which all the grades of inimical celestial powers were brought to nought; and it is of this that the Israelites had a revelation at that moment by the sea shore.

AND THEY BELIEVED IN THE LORD. Was it only then that they believed? Do we not read that "the people believed" as soon as it was proclaimed to them that the Lord intended to bring them out from Egypt (Ex. IV, 31)? Had they not seen before many mighty works of the Holy One in Egypt itself? Yes, but this statement concerning their belief refers particularly to what Moses told them: "Fear not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord" (v. 13). 'How is it', asked R. Jesse, 'that after Moses had said to the people, "for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever" (*Ibid.*), we are now told that "Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore" (v. 30)?' R. Jose, in answer, pointed out that after all they did not see them alive. This reply did not satisfy R. Jesse, nor R. Abba, who explained the verse thus: 'There is, according to our teaching, a world (*'olam*) above[1] and a world below.[2] Now from the world above begins the kindling of lights which is afterwards completed in the world below, this world subsuming in itself all (the emanations). From this lower world issue punishments to mankind, and through

[1] *Binah.* [2] *Malkuth.*

it also God did wonders and miracles for Israel. And when this world was aroused to perform wonders, the Egyptians were through it cast into the sea at the same time that deliverance was wrought for Israel. Hence the words, "ye shall see them again no more for ever" (*'ad 'olam*, lit. until a world), meaning, "ye shall not see them until that world (*'olam*) will be roused, and they will be delivered to judgement"; and as soon as that took place "Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore . . . and they believed in the Lord and Moses His servant".'

THEN SANG MOSES. . . . R. Judah applied to Moses the words: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. I, 5). 'Happy is the lot of Israel,' he said, 'that the Holy One, blessed be He, loved them more than any other nation, and out of the abundance of His love appointed to them a prophet of truth and a faithful shepherd, within whom He awakened the holy spirit more than in any other faithful prophet, communicating to him a part of His very self. Jacob dedicated the tribe of Levi to the Holy One, blessed be He, and as Levi was His in a special sense, He took him and crowned him with many crowns, and anointed him with the oil of the holy spirit from above, so that the holy spirit should issue forth to the world through him as from the representative of the holy faith. When the hour arrived at which Moses the faithful shepherd and prophet was to descend into this world, God brought forth a holy spirit from the depths of a sapphire stone in which it was hidden, and crowned it with crowns, and illumined it with two hundred and forty-eight lights, and stationed it before Him and gave over unto its charge the whole of His own Household, with the one hundred and seventy-three keys. Then He crowned it yet again with five diadems, each of which ascended and illumined a thousand worlds of lights and lamps stored in the secret treasures of the holy and highest King. Then the Holy One led it through all the lightful splendour of the Garden of Eden, and brought it to His

Palace through all the ranks of the celestial legions. These were greatly amazed, and cried aloud: "Turn aside! For the Holy One has roused a Spirit to rule and to shake the worlds." One voice murmured: "Who is he, this stranger, in whose hands are all the keys?" [54a] But another rebuked the first, and proclaimed: "Receive him in your midst! For on a day, and that right soon, he will descend to dwell among men, and the Torah, the most hidden treasure, shall be delivered into his hands to shake worlds both above and below." Then all trembled and followed Moses, saying: "Thou hast caused a man to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water" (Ps. LXVI, 12). The letter *Mim* of the name of *MoSHE* drew nigh and crowned itself with its crown, and then crowned Moses with three hundred and twenty-five crowns, delivering also its keys into his hand. The letter *Shin* of the three Patriarchs crowned him with three holy crowns, and delivered into his keeping all the keys of the King and appointed him the faithful steward of the Household. The letter *Hé* drew nigh and crowned him with its crown. Then the spirit descended in one of the boats that sail on the great Sea, and received him in order to train him for sovereignty, and gave him, Moses, weapons with which to vanquish and punish Pharaoh and his whole land. And when he came down to earth in the seed of Levi, four hundred and twenty-five lights glittered before the face of the King, and four hundred and twenty-five esoteric formations of letters, expressing Divine mysteries, accompanied the spirit to its place. When he came forth into the world, the letter *Hé* of the Holy Name shone from his face, and the house wherein he dwelt was filled with his radiance. At that hour the Holy One proclaimed: "Before I had formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I made thee a prophet unto the nations." '

Said R. Isaac: 'At the moment when the Holy One slew the great chieftain of the Egyptians, and Moses and the children of Israel saw him, they began to sing.'

THEN SANG MOSES AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

THIS SONG UNTO THE LORD. Said R. Abba: 'I have examined all the songs which Israel sang unto the Holy One, and I find that all of them began with "then" (*az*) (Cf. Jos. x, 12; 1 Kings viii, 12; Num. xxi, 17.) The reason for this is that all the wonders, and all the mighty deeds which were done to Israel when the light of the Holy Ancient One shone in His crowns, are engraved in the letters *Aleph* and *Zain*[1]. Then there is song, the song of all sides. "*Yashir*" (lit. will sing): the tense suggests that this song fitted that occasion and will also fit the future Redemption, when it will again be sung by Israel. The expression "Moses and Israel" proves that the righteous of the past ages, although they have entered into the highest regions and are united with the "Bundle of life", will all rise again in bodily form and behold the signs and mighty works which the Holy One shall show to Israel, and sing this hymn.' R. Simeon established this fact by the following verse: "And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the rest of his people" (Isa. xi, 11). ' "The rest" ', he said, 'are "the remnant", the righteous, like Eldad and Medad, who "remained" in the camp (Num. xi, 26), the righteous of whom it has been said that the world is sustained by them, who make themselves mere "remainders", as it were. It is they who will be brought to life again at the future Redemption. And why? Are they not already bound up with the "Bundle of life"? Why bring them down to earth again? Let the experience of the past give the answer. It has pleased the Holy One, in former time, to send down to earth those spirits and souls who belonged to the highest supernal grade. Should He not, then, let the spirits of the righteous men come down again in the future when He will make the crooked straight (i.e. redeem the world)? For, indeed, "there is not a righteous man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not" (Eccl. vii, 20). And even the sinless ones who only died because of the "counsel

[1] *Aleph* symbolizes the first Sephirah, and *Zain* the seventh (after the first three), and when the light of the Crown—the first Sephirah—illumines the seventh, namely Malkuth-Kingdom, the power of God is manifested.

of the Serpent"[1] will arise and be counsellors to the Messiah. "Moses and the children of Israel will sing this song." The same is implied in the words: "As in the days of thy going out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things" (Micah vii, 15), where the "him" refers to Moses. Also: "I will show him the salvation of God" (Ps. l, 24); "I will show him my salvation" (*Ibid.* xci, 16). [54b] Moses and the children of Israel will then sing "this song unto the Lord": the song of the Matrona to the Holy One, blessed be He. We have been taught that every one who sings this hymn daily with true devotion will be worthy to sing it at the Redemption that is to be, for it refers both to the past world and to the future world; it contains confirmations of faith and mysteries relating to the days of the Messiah. The Shekinah will sing this song to the Lord, because the King will receive Her with a radiant countenance. R. Jose said that the Shekinah will praise the Lord for all the concentration of light and holiness which the Holy King shall direct towards her. Said R. Judah: 'If this is the song of the Shekinah, why does it say that Moses and the children of Israel sang it? Blessed were they that they knew how to praise Him for all the power and might which the Shekinah receives and shall receive from Him, the Holy King!' According to R. Abba, the singing is to be directed, not to any of the emanations of the Deity, but to the Holy King in His very essence, as it says, concerning the song of Moses and the children of Israel, that they sang "to the Lord". R. Jose said that the words "this song to the Lord" refer to the "river that issues forth from Eden" (Gen. ii, 10), from which all the abundance of oil issues to kindle the lights; whereas the words "I will sing unto the Lord" (*Ibid.*) refer to the Supernal Holy King.

AND SPAKE, SAYING: this repetition denotes that it is to be sung in all generations, in order that it should never be forgotten, for he who is worthy to sing this song in this

[1] T. B., Sabb. 55*b*, Benjamin, Amram, Jishai, and Kaleb, David's son, were sinless and died not for their own sins, but because of the "serpent's counsel", i.e. of "original sin".

world shall be worthy to sing it in the world to come, and to declare praises with it in the days of the Messiah, when the Community of Israel will rejoice in the Holy One. "Saying" means saying at the time of the Exodus, saying when Israel was in the Holy Land, saying in exile, saying when Israel will be redeemed, saying in the world to come.

I WILL SING UNTO THE LORD. As stated above, they spoke in the name of the Shekinah, hence the singular. "To the Lord"—to the Holy King. For highly exalted is He (*gaoh gaah*): He ascends to be crowned with His crowns in order to dispense blessings, and perform wonderful works, and to be exalted in and through all; exalted in this world, exalted likewise in the world to come; exalted in order that He may crown Himself with His crowns and be glorified in perfect joy. THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER HATH HE THROWN INTO THE SEA. The dominion below and the dominion above, which are bound up the one with the other, have been delivered to that great "Sea" and that great sovereignty for punishment, as we have been taught that the Holy One does not exercise judgement below until He has done so above on the celestial representative of the particular nation, as it says: "The Lord shall punish the host of the high ones in the height (heaven) and the kings of the earth upon the earth" (Isa. XXIV, 21). R. Judah said: 'On that night extreme severity was roused, for the Matrona asked that all the hosts below and all the powers above should be delivered unto Her. And so they were.'

R. Hiya discoursed on the verse: *Thou hast beset me behind and before, and hast laid thine hand upon me* (Ps. CXXXIX, 5). He said: 'How greatly is it incumbent on the children of men to glorify the Holy One, blessed be He! For when He created the world [55a] He looked on man and designed to make him to rule over all earthly things. He was of dual form and resembled both celestial and earthly beings. The Lord sent him down in splendour, so that when the lesser creatures beheld the glory of his state they fell down before him in awe, as it says: "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every

fowl of the earth" (Gen. IX, 2). The Holy One brought him into the garden of His own planting, so that he might guard it and have endless joy and delight therein. A canopy of precious stones the Holy One also devised and fashioned to enfold man with glory: and the supernal angels rejoiced in his presence. Then the Lord gave him the commandment concerning the one tree: and, alas! man failed in his obedience and was not steadfast in the commandment of his Master. We find in the book of Enoch that after the Holy One, blessed be He, had transported Enoch to the supernal regions and shown him all the treasures of the King, both the celestial and the terrestrial, He permitted him to behold the Tree of Life and that Tree of which Adam was warned, and showed him the place where Adam had dwelt in the Garden of Eden, and Enoch perceived that if Adam had been obedient he would have so dwelt for ever, having eternal life and perpetual joy in the glory of the Garden. But because he broke the commandment of his Lord, he was punished.' R. Isaac said: 'Adam was created as a double personality (male and female), as previously explained. "And he took one of his ribs . . ." (Gen. II, 21): He sawed him in two, and thus two persons were formed, one from the east and one from the west, as it says: "Thou hast beset me behind and before", i.e. from the west and from the east.' Said R. Ḥiya: 'What did the Holy One do? He formed the female, perfected her beauty exceedingly, and brought her to Adam, as it is written: "And the Lord God *formed* the side (*ẓela'*, cf. Ex. XXVI, 20) which he had taken from man into a woman" (*Ibid.* 22).' R. Judah said: 'The Holy One gave to Adam a supernal soul and endowed it with wisdom and understanding that he might know all things. From which place did He take the soul?' 'From the place whence the other holy souls emanate.' Thus R. Isaac. Said R. Judah: 'We learn this from the verse: "Let the earth bring forth the living soul after its kind" (Gen. II, 24). "The earth" signifies the place where the Sanctuary stood, and "living soul" refers to the soul of the first man.' R. Ḥiya said: 'Adam knew more of the supernal wisdom than the angels above; he was able to penetrate into all things and to be in closer union with his

Master than any of the other beings in the universe. But when he sinned, all the springs of wisdom were closed to him: "And the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground" (*Ibid.* III, 24).' Said R. Abba: 'The first man consisted of male and female, for it says: "Let us make man in our image after our likeness" (*Ibid.* I, 26), which indicates that male and female were originally created as one and separated afterwards. When it says, "the ground from whence he was taken" (*Ibid.*), the "ground" represents the feminine principle, and the Holy One associated with this to create man.'

MY STRENGTH AND SONG IS JAH. R. Jose said: 'The *Yod* and the *Hé* in the Divine Name are mingled, and one is contained in the other and they are never separated, being for ever united in love, being the source whence emanate all those streams and springs of blessing and satisfaction to the universe. The waters of these springs never "deceive" (Isa. LVIII, 11). Hence: "and He became my salvation", since for this purpose and unto this end the Holy King reveals His power below, and the Right Hand is moved to perform marvellous deeds.'

THIS IS MY GOD AND I WILL MAKE HIM A HABITATION; THE GOD OF MY FATHER, AND I WILL EXALT HIM. "This is my God" refers to the *Zaddik*, from whom blessings emanate on the married state; "and I will make him a habitation" in the place where love is found, namely in the Sanctuary. "The God of my father, and I will exalt him" was said by Moses (the Levite) in regard to the supernal sphere whence the Levites derive, so that in this way there should be symmetry and perfection in that place. R. Isaac said that "and he became my salvation" refers to the Holy King, as in Isa. XII, 2. [55*b*]

R. Hezekiah interpreted the verse: "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (Prov. XVII, 17), as follows. '"A friend" is the Holy One, of whom it is written, "Thine own friend and thy father's friend, forsake not" (*Ibid.* XXVII, 10). The Israelites are "brethren and friends" of the Holy One, and therefore when their enemies

afflict them, God says, "For my brethren and friends' sake I will say, Peace be within thee" (Ps. CXXII, 9). He is a brother to meet the "adversity that is born".' Rabbi Judah refers the word "born" to the Holy One, for when one of His friends suffers tribulation through his enemies, the Holy King is roused in His strength to avenge him: His power is "born", that is, manifested. R. Jose said: 'How great should be man's love for the Holy One! Verily, love is the only true worship, and he who worships God in love is called "beloved" by Him.' There is an apparent contradiction in the two verses: "Thine own friend and thy father's friend forsake not", and "Withdraw thy foot from thy friend's house" (*Ibid.* XXV, 17). The members of the Fellowship have, however, explained it by applying the verses to different kinds of sacrifice. One should be diligent in sacrificing burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, but in regard to sin-offerings it is better to sin not, and so "withdraw thy foot from thy Friend's house", the Temple. Indeed, "thou must not forsake thy Friend", thou must worship Him, cleave to Him, keep His commandments, but "withdraw thy foot from thy evil impulse that he should not become thy master, withdraw it from thy house, namely from the holy soul which thy Friend has put into thee". The true worship of the Holy One, blessed be He, consists in loving Him above all and in all, as it is written: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" (Deut. VI, 5).

All the Israelites beheld at the sea what even the prophet Ezekiel was not privileged to see, and even the embryos in their mothers' wombs beheld the wonderful works of the Holy One, and sang praises to Him, saying: "This is my God and I extol Him; the God of my *father* and I exalt Him", namely the God of father Abraham. Said R. Jose: 'Does the God of Abraham need our exaltation? Is He not already exalted high above our comprehension?' R. Jesse replied: 'Yet man can and must exalt Him in the sense of uniting in his mind all the attributes in the Holy Name, for this is the supremest expression of worship.'

R. Judah sat one day at the feet of R. Simeon, and he began to expound the following verse: *The voice of thy*

watchmen, they lifted up their voices, they shall sing altogether . . . when the Lord shall return to Zion (Isa. LII, 8). "These "watchmen" ", he said, 'are those who "watch" for the time when the Holy One will build His House once again. The use of the past tense "lifted", where we should rather have expected the future "shall lift", conveys the lesson that he who *has lifted* up his voice in weeping and lamentation over the destruction of the Temple shall be worthy to be numbered among those of whom it says "they shall sing altogether", and to enjoy the privilege of beholding the Holy One when He shall inhabit His House once more. The words "when the Lord returns (to) Zion" are to be understood as meaning "when the Lord brings back Zion". For when the earthly Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Community of Israel was scattered over the face of the earth, the Holy King drew Zion[1] up to Himself and stretched it out before Him, because the Community of Israel was banished. When, however, the Community of Israel shall be restored, the Holy King will restore Zion to its place, to unite itself with her in perfect bliss; and the children of Israel will sing: "He is my God, and I have prepared for Him an habitation." Concerning this it is written: "This is the Lord, we have waited for him, let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isa. XXV, 9)—meaning, literally, "in His own salvation".

THE LORD IS A MAN OF WAR, THE LORD IS HIS NAME. R. Abba referred in connection with this verse to the words: "Therefore it is said in the book of the wars of YHVH: 'Vaheb in Supha, and in the brooks of Arnon' " (Num. XXI, 14). He said: 'How assiduously should one ponder on each word of the Torah, for there is not a single word in it which does not contain allusions to the Supernal Holy Name, not a word which does not contain many mysteries, many aspects, many roots, many branches. [56a] Where now is this "book of the wars of the Lord" ? What is meant is, of course, the Torah, for, as the members of the Fellowship have pointed out, he who is engaged in the battle of the Torah, struggling to penetrate into her mysteries, will wrest

[1] According to the commentators, in this place Zion = Yesod.

from his struggles an abundance of peace. All other wars involve strife and destruction, but the war of the Torah is one of peace and love: "Vaheb in Supha" may be read "*ahabah be-suphah*", "love is in her end", for there is no love nor peace like this. The word "book" is used, and not "torah" as we might expect, for an esoteric reason, viz. that there is a divine sphere called "Book", as it says: "Seek ye out of the *book* of the Lord and read" (Isa. XXXIV, 16), on which all the mighty works of the Lord depend and from which they emanate. With this, God made war against a certain sphere at the end (*soph*) of the grades called Vaheb. God also fought against the "brooks", the subsidiary principalities attached to it. He waged war from the region called "Arnon", which is the sphere of the supernal marital union[1] which is never dissolved. Therein it is rooted and spreads its branches to make war on every side and to manifest great and glorious power. When the mighty works of the Lord are roused and His battles begin to be waged, how many celestial warriors are stirred up to do martial deeds on every side ! Then swords and spears are whetted, and mighty deeds begin. The sea grows stormy and the waves thereof rise mightily, and the boats toss on the heaving waters. Then the fray commences with catapults, spears, swords, and arrows, and the Lord takes command of His hosts to conduct the battle. Woe unto those against whom the Holy One declares war ! "The Lord is a man of war." From the letters of this phrase lines of battle are formed against the wicked, the enemies of the Lord. These letters are known to the initiated, as has been explained elsewhere. In time to come the Holy One, blessed be He, will conduct a stupendous warfare against the heathen nations, to the glory of His Name: "Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations" (Zech. XIV, 3); "Thus will I magnify myself and I will be known in the eyes of many nations" (Ezek. XXVIII, 23).'

PHARAOH'S CHARIOTS AND HIS MIGHT HE CAST INTO THE SEA AND THE CHOSEN ONES OF HIS KNIGHTS WERE

[1] *Ḥokmah* and *Binah*.

DROWNED IN THE RED SEA. R. Judah said: 'When the Israelites were about to cross the sea, the Holy One said to the angel who is appointed over the sea: "Divide thy waters!" "Why?" said the angel. "So that My children may pass through." "Do they really deserve this redemption?" said the angel. "Wherein lies the difference between them and the Egyptians?" Said the Holy One: "I made this condition with the sea when I created the world!" Thereupon He exerted His power and the waters were piled up, wherefore it is written: "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee, they were afraid; the depths also were troubled" (Ps. LXXVII, 17). Then He said to the angel: "Exterminate all those hosts", and it then covered them, as it says, "the chariots of Pharaoh and his host he cast into the sea".'

Said R. Eleazar: 'Behold, how many chariots, how many hosts, the Holy One has formed above! How many camps, how many divisions! And all of them are [56b] linked to one another, all are chariots one to another, manifold grades, diverse and yet united! From the left side the chariots of the unholy principalities rise up. They also are linked one with the other, grade to grade, the greatest of them being, as we have already pointed out, "the firstborn of Pharaoh", whom the Holy One killed. All of these unholy powers are delivered unto the judgement of the Kingdom, the which is called "the great sea", in order that they may be uprooted each in his own grade, and be utterly cast down, and when they are broken above, all their counterparts below are also broken and lost in the "lower sea". As to the "captains" (*shalishim*) who were drowned in the Red Sea, it has already been made clear that all these grades consist of three (*shaloש*) attributes each (two and one, the triad, corresponding to the holy triad above). They were all delivered unto Her (the Shekinah's) hand, that their power might be broken. All the ten punishments which the Holy One brought on Egypt were achieved by the power of one "hand", for the "left hand" is included in the right, the ten fingers forming one entity in correspondence to the Ten expressions by which the Holy One is designated. Then came a punishment which was equal to all the rest, that of the sea: "The last one was the hardest"

(Isa. VIII, 23). And in the future the Holy One will deal similarly with all the hosts, princes and chieftains of Edom (Rome), as it is written: "Who is he who cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save" (Isa. LXIII, 1).'

PHARAOH'S CHARIOTS AND MIGHT HE CAST INTO THE SEA. R. Isaac referred to the verse: "When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens" (Jer. X, 13), and said: 'According to tradition, the Holy One created seven heavens, and in each heaven stars and planets are fixed. Arabot is above them all. The length of each heaven is such that it would take two hundred years to traverse, and the distance between each heaven and the next would take five hundred years to traverse. As for Arabot, one would need one thousand five hundred years to cover its whole length, and the selfsame number for traversing its breadth. All the heavens are lighted from the radiance of Arabot. Above Arabot is the heaven of the *Ḥayoth*, and above this latter sphere another heaven, brighter than all, as it is written: "And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the Ḥayoth" (Ezek. I, 22). And below there are many chariots at the right hand and at the left, of many grades, each with its own name. And beneath them are others, smaller and yet more varied, which are the smallest ranks of this celestial but unholy order; as it is written: "The sea is great . . . small beasts and great are there" (Ps. CIV, 25), as we have affirmed, that on the left side below there is a ruler, the "other side", attached to those above, but they are crushed by the great holy power, according to our interpretation of the words, "Pharaoh's chariots and his might he cast into the sea".'

THY RIGHT HAND, O LORD, GLORIFIED IN POWER. R. Simeon said: 'In the hour when the morning breaks, the Hind (Shekinah) rises and starts from her place in order to enter the two hundred palaces of the King. When a man studies [57a] the Torah in solitude at midnight, at the hour when the north wind springs up and the Hind desires to be

astir, he is taken with her into supernal realms, to appear before the King. When dawn brightens and he recites his prayers, and unifies the Holy Name in manner due, he is encircled with a thread of grace; he looks into the firmament, and a light of holy knowledge rests upon him. As the man is thus adorned and shrouded with light all things tremble before him, for he is called the son of the Holy One, the son of the King's Palace. Concerning him it is written, "The Lord is nigh to all who call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth" (Ps. CXLV, 18). The words "in truth" have the same significance as in the verse, "Thou wilt give truth to Jacob" (Micah VII, 20), "truth" here meaning the full knowledge which enables the worshipper perfectly to unite the letters of the Holy Name in prayer, which is indeed the true service of the Holy Name. He who knows how to unify thus the Holy Name establishes the *one*, the peculiar people in the world, as it is written: "And who is like thy people Israel, one people on earth?" (2 Sam. VIII, 23). Therefore it has been taught that a priest who knows not how to unify thus the Holy Name cannot perform proper service, for on the achievement of that unity hangs both celestial and terrestrial worship. The priest must, therefore, strive to concentrate heart and mind on the attainment of this unification, so that those above and those below may be blessed. And if a man comes to unify the Holy Name, but without proper concentration of mind and devotion of heart, to the end that the supernal and terrestrial hosts should be blessed thereby, then his prayer is rejected and all beings denounce him, and he is numbered with those of whom the Holy One said, "When ye come to see (reading *lir'oth* instead of *leraoth*) my countenance (*panim*, lit. countenances), who hath required this from your hand, to tread my courts?" All the "countenances" of the King are hidden in the depths of darkness, but for those who know how perfectly to unite the Holy Name, all the walls of darkness are burst asunder, and the diverse "countenances" of the King are made manifest, and shine upon all, bringing blessing to heavenly and earthly beings. He who comes to unify the Holy Name must do so from the side of *zoth* (lit. "this", a name for the

Shekinah), as it is written, "with this (*be-zoth*) shall Aaron come into the sanctuary" (Lev. XVI, 3), in order that the *Ẓaddik* and Righteousness may be perfectly united, and through this union all things may be blessed. But if he attempts to unify the Holy Name without bringing himself into the fitting frame of mind, if he come not in fear and love, then God says unto him: "Who hath required this (*zoth*) of your hand to tread my courts?" (*Ibid.*). No blessing appertains to such prayer; nay, rather, he who prays in such a fashion merely invokes upon himself and upon all things the attribute of Judgement. Now all light, all blessing, all joy, emanates from the "Right Hand" of the Holy One, blessed be He. Yet at the same time the "Left Hand" participates in the activities of the Right, just as in a human being, for though the right is the leader, yet when it is active the left becomes active likewise. When a man raises up his hand in prayer, his purpose is to bless God. But with God it is the reverse: when He raises up His right hand, then woe unto those below, yea, woe and tribulation; for then all blessing and support is removed from them. We learn this from the verse: "Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them" (Ex. XV, 12), meaning, that so soon as God raised His right hand they perished. (The Targum also renders, "Thou *liftedst* up Thy right hand".) When the Right Hand is in its place, the Left Hand is under its dominance, therefore stern justice can have no power among men. But if the Right Hand is lifted up, the Left remains alone, and stirs up mighty judgement in the world.' Each time that R. Simeon came to the words, "He hath drawn back his right hand" (Lam. II, 3), he used to weep, interpreting them to mean that the Lord permitted the Left Hand to be powerful and to have sole dominion over the worlds, while the Right Hand remained in another place, far off. R. Simeon interpreted [57b] the words "*haẓaddik abad*" (lit. "the righteous comes to grief", is lost, perishes (Isa. LVII, 1), in the sense that when the Temple was destroyed, of all the aspects of the King it was the one that is known as "Righteous" (*Ẓaddik*) that "lost", in a twofold sense. He lost because blessings no longer abode with Him as before; and

He also lost because His spouse, the Community of Israel, was parted from Him. Thus the Righteous "lost" more than all. Moreover, concerning the time to be, which is the time of the Messiah, it is written : "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy king cometh unto thee, he is righteous and saving himself (*nosha'*)" (Zech. IX, 9). It does not say "*moshia'*"—"saving" or "a saviour", but "*nosha'*"—"being saved", literally.

THY RIGHT HAND, O LORD, GLORIFIED IN POWER, THY RIGHT HAND DASHES IN PIECES THE ENEMY. The form "*ne'ddari*" (glorified) instead of "*ne'ddar*" suggests a plural, referring as it does to the joining of the Left Hand with the Right. Said R. Simeon: 'It is as we have explained. Just as man was divided physically, in order that he should receive a wife and both together form one body, so the Right Hand was divided, as it were, in order that it might take unto itself the Left and both become one, and therefore it is that God smites and heals with one and the same Hand. Note that this whole song has a reference both to the time of its composition and to the future; hence it does not say "*hath* dashed", but "dashes" (*tir'az*, lit. will dash), i.e. when the Messiah shall arise. The same applies to the following verse: "In the fulness of thy majesty thou *wilt* overthrow (*taharos*) thine opponents; thou *wilt* send forth (*teshalah*) thy wrath; it will devour them like stubble." Thus the words, "Thy right hand, O Lord, glorified in power", refers to this time, to this world; the words "Thy right hand will dash the enemy" to the time of the Messiah; "In the fulness of thy majesty thou wilt overthrow thine opponents" to the time of Gog and Magog; "Thou wilt send forth thy wrath, it will devour them like stubble" to the time of the resurrection, of which it says, "and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. XII, 2). Blessed are those who will be left in the world at that time ! And who will they be ? None will remain, except the circumcised who have accepted upon themselves the sign of the holy covenant and have entered into this holy covenant in its two

parts,[1] as we have pointed out, and have guarded the covenant against contact with an alien sphere. These will remain and their names will be written "to life eternal", as it says: "And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called 'holy', even everyone that is written to life in Jerusalem" (Isa. IV, 3). "Zion" and "Jerusalem" symbolize the two grades (Foundation and Kingdom) into which he who will be circumcised shall enter. Such shall remain at that time, and the Holy One, blessed be He, will renew the world with them and rejoice together with them. Concerning that time it is written: "May the glory of the Lord remain for ever; may the Lord rejoice in his works" (Ps. CIV, 31).'

R. Hiya once went to visit R. Eleazar, whom he found with R. Jose, the son of R. Simeon ben Lekunya, his father-in-law. As R. Eleazar raised his head he noticed R. Hiya. Said the latter: 'What is the meaning of the words, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness" (Prov. III, 17) ?' He replied: 'How foolish are the sons of men that they neither know nor heed the words of the Torah ! These words are the "ways" by which one merits that "pleasantness of the Lord" of which the Psalmist speaks (Ps. XXVII, 5). As we have pointed out on another occasion, the Torah and her ways emanate from this "pleasantness".' Said R. Hiya: 'We have a tradition that when the Holy One, blessed be He, gave the Torah to Israel a light shone forth from that sphere which is called "Pleasantness", a light wherewith the Holy One crowned Himself, and from which were irradiated all worlds, [58a] all firmaments, and all crowns, and concerning which it is written: "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart" (S.S. III, 11). When the building of the Temple was completed, the Holy One, blessed be He, crowned Himself with this crown and seated Himself on His Throne. But since the destruction of the Temple He has not donned this crown, and the "Pleasantness" is concealed and hidden.' Said R. Eleazar: 'When Moses entered the cloud (Ex. XXIV,

[1] I.e. the actual circumcision and the *peri'ah*, or folding back of the flesh.

18), like a man traversing the region of the Spirit, a certain great angel, whose name, according to tradition, is Kemuel, and who is appointed guardian and chief over twelve thousand messengers, sought to attack him. Thereupon Moses opened his mouth and uttered the twelve letters of the Holy Name which the Holy One had taught him at the bush, and the angel departed from him to a distance of twelve thousand parasangs. And Moses walked in the midst of the cloud, his eyes flaming like coals of fire. Then another angel met him, greater and more eminent than the first. His name, according to tradition, is Hadraniel, and he is set above all the other angels and celestial cohorts, yea, is even removed from them by a distance of one thousand and sixty myriads of parasangs, and his voice, when he proclaims the will of the Lord, penetrates through two hundred thousand firmaments which are surrounded by a white fire. On seeing him, Moses was struck dumb with awe, and would have thrown himself down from the cloud, but the Holy One, blessed be He, admonished him, saying: "Moses, thou didst speak much with Me at the bush and didst desire that I should reveal to thee the Holy Name, and wast not afraid, and art thou now affrighted before one of My servants!" When Moses heard these words from the voice of his Master, he took courage; opening his mouth, he uttered the Supreme Name of seventy-two letters. At this, Hadraniel trembled, and drew near to Moses and cried: "Happy indeed is thy lot, O Moses, for that thou hast been vouchsafed knowledge such as is denied even to the supernal angels!" He then went along with Moses until they came to a mighty fire belonging to an angel whose name is Sandalphon, and who, as tradition tells us, is removed from his fellow angels through the magnitude of his splendour by a distance of five hundred years, and who stands behind the "curtain" of his Master, and out of the prayers of Israel weaves crowns for his Lord, and when such a crown is placed on the head of the Holy King, He receives Israel's supplications, and all the heavenly hosts begin to tremble in awe, and to shout: "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place" (Ezek. III, 12). Said Hadraniel to Moses: "Moses, I can no longer be with thee, lest the

powerful fire of Sandalphon burn me". At that moment Moses began to quake with mighty dread, but the Holy One took hold of him and made him sit before Him and taught him the Torah, and spread over him the radiance of that "pleasantness", so that his countenance shone in all those firmaments and all the hosts of heaven trembled before him when he descended with the Torah. When the Israelites committed the sin of the Golden Calf below, the Holy One took away from Moses one thousand parts of that splendour, and the supernal angels and all those hosts came to burn him. When the Holy One said to him: "Go, get thee down, for thy people . . . have corrupted themselves" (Ex. XXXII, 7), Moses trembled and could not utter a word. Then he began to pray and intercede for Israel. Said the Holy One to him: "Moses lay hold of My Throne and gain courage therefrom!" And the Holy One rebuked all those hosts, and Moses took hold of the two tablets of stone and brought them down. Concerning this event it is written: "A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, and bringeth down the strength of the confidence thereof" (Prov. XXI, 22). And from the remnants of that brightness Moses's countenance shone. Now, if merely because of this remnant of brightness the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, how glorious must the splendour have been in its original state! Said R. Hiya: "The words, "Thy right hand, O Lord, glorified in power", refer to the Torah. This "right hand" does "dash in pieces the enemy"; for there is nothing which can break the power of the heathen nations save the power of the Torah, in the study of which Israel is absorbed. For as long as they are faithful students of the Torah the "Right Hand" is powerful and breaks down the domination of the heathen, and therefore the Torah is called "Strength", as it says, "The Lord will give *strength* to his people" (Ps. XXIX, 11). Contrariwise, when Israel neglects the Torah, the "Left Hand" predominates, and with it the power of heathendom and the nations rule over Israel and issue tyrannous decrees against them, and Israel is scattered among the nations, as it is written: [58b] "Why doeth the land perish and is burned up like a wilderness? . . . Because they have

forsaken my Torah" (Jer. IX, 11–12).' Said R. Eleazar: 'It is indeed so. As long as the voices of the Israelites are heard in the synagogues and in the houses of study they are powerful: "the voice is the voice of Jacob"; but if not, then "the hand are the hands of Esau" (Gen. XXVII, 22), as has been explained on another occasion.'

IN THE GREATNESS OF THINE EXCELLENCY (lit. uplifting) THOU OVERTHROWEST THEM THAT RISE UP AGAINST THEE. R. Hezekiah found here the same idea as in the verse: "Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest thou thyself in time of trouble?" (Ps. X, 1). 'The sins of mankind,' he said, 'cause the Holy One to ascend higher and higher, and then men cry bitterly but without avail, because the Holy One has departed from the world, and they are unable to return to Him.' R. Isaac, however, applied these words to the time when the Holy One will adorn Himself with majesty in face of the nations who will gather against Him, of whom it says: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed" (Ps. II, 2). We are told that the seventy guardians of the nations will at that time gather from all sides with the armies of the whole world and start war against Jerusalem the holy city, and take counsel together against the Holy One. They will say: "Let us rise first against the Patron, and then against His people and against His sanctuary!" Then "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision" (v. 4). He will put on His majesty and shall dash them in pieces.' R. Abba said, in the name of R. Jesse the Elder—and R. Simeon made the same remark—that the Holy One will bring to life again all those kings who afflicted Israel and Jerusalem: Hadrian, Lupinus, Nebuchadnezzar, Sennacherib, and all the other kings of the nations who have destroyed His house, and set them up again as rulers, and they shall gather many nations, and then He will do vengeance and justice upon them near Jerusalem, as it is written: "And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that *have* fought against Jerusalem" (Zech. XIV, 12). On the other hand, here

it says: "In the greatness of thy excellency Thou wilt overthrow thine opponents", which refers to the Messianic times; and so this song has an eternal significance.

THE ENEMY SAID: I WILL PURSUE, I WILL OVERTAKE. "The enemy" is the celestial guardian of the Egyptians. When power was given to him over Israel, he desired to make an end of them, but the Holy One remembered the "Mountains of the world" (the Patriarchs), and these shielded them. And this applies to all the supernal guardians of the nations: they all have the same desire to do away with Israel, but the Holy One remembers the merit of the "Mountains of the world" and protects them. When Moses realized this, he sang praises to the Holy One, blessed be He, saying: WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE AMONG THE GODS, O LORD? Said R. Simeon: 'There is a mighty and wondrous tree in the celestial sphere which supplies nourishment to beings above and below. It has twelve boundaries and stretches along the four sides of the world which encompass it. Seventy branches ascend from it and imbibe nourishment from its roots. Each branch, as the time arrives for it to be dominant, endeavours to drain the whole life of the tree, which is the essence of all the branches, and without which they would not exist. Israel clings to the main body of the tree, and when its time comes to be dominant [59a] it endeavours to protect the branches and to give peace to all. This is also symbolized by the seventy oxen offered on the feast of Tabernacles. Therefore it says: "Who is like unto thee among the gods (*elim*), O Lord?"; *elim* in the sense of "trees", as in the passage, "for ye shall be ashamed of the *elim* (terebinths) which ye desired" (Isa. I, 29). "Who among these is like unto Thee, Who hast pity on all? Among the surroundings of the tree is any like unto Thee, eager to be the guardian of all, even when it dominates them", not wishing to destroy them? "Who is like unto Thee, glorified in holiness?" Namely, in that supreme power called "Holiness", "power of the Lord", "pleasantness of the Lord", as already stated.'

"Who is like unto Thee?" R. Jose discoursed on the

verse: "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and, behold, all is vanity and breaking of spirit" (Eccl. I, 14). 'How could Solomon,' he said, 'the wisest of men, say that all human actions are vanity? Can this be said of acts of righteousness and lovingkindness, of which it is written, "and the work of righteousness shall be peace" (Isa. XXXII, 17)? However, as has been pointed out, "all is vanity" refers to "works that are done *under* the sun," whilst "the work of righteousness" is *above* the sun. So far so good. But what, then, is the meaning of "all is breath (*hebel*) and breaking of spirit" in regard to the "works that are done under the sun"? Have we not been taught that "*hebel*" (breath) is the basis of the world above and the world below? It has been explained in the following way, and it is truly so. Every action done here below, if it is done with the intention of serving the Holy King, produces a "breath" in the world above, and there is no breath which has no voice; and this voice ascends and crowns itself in the supernal world and becomes an intercessor before the Holy One, blessed be He. Contrariwise, every action which is not done with this purpose becomes a "breath" which floats about in the world, and when the soul of the doer leaves his body, this "breath" rolls about like a stone in a sling, and it "breaks the spirit". The act done and the word spoken in the service of the Holy One, however, ascend high above the sun and become a holy breath, which is the seed sowed by man in that world, and is called *ẓedakah* (righteousness, lovingkindness), as it is written: "Sow for yourselves according to righteousness" (Hos. X, 12). This "breath" guides the departed soul and brings it into the region of the supernal glory, so that it is "bound with the bundle of life with the Lord" (1 Sam. XXV, 29). It is concerning this that it is written: "Thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall gather thee up" (Isa. LVIII, 8). That which is called "the glory of the Lord" gathers up the souls of that holy breath, and this is indeed ease and comfort for them; but the other is called "breaking of spirit". Blessed are the righteous whose works are "above the sun" and who sow a seed of righteousness which makes them worthy to enter the

world to come, and concerning whom it is written: "Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (Mal. III, 20).' R. Simeon said: 'When the Temple was built below, it was built under the ægis of severity and wrath, as it is written: "For this city hath been to me as a provocation of my anger and of my fury from the day that they built it" (Jer. XXXII, 31); but in the time to come the Holy One will build it and restore it on another noble basis, called "Righteousness", as it is written: "In righteousness shalt thou be established" (Isa. LIV, 14), and therefore it will endure. [59b]

THOU STRETCHEDST OUT THY HAND, THE EARTH SWALLOWED THEM. Said R. Isaac: 'The members of the Fellowship have remarked that when the Holy One brought the Egyptians dead out of the sea, He bade the earth "take them in", but she refused, until He stretched out His right hand and adjured her, and then she swallowed them.' R. Eleazar said that the "stretching out" of the "right hand" was to separate it from the "left" so that judgement might be executed.

THOU LEADEST THROUGH THY MERCY THE PEOPLE WHOM THOU REDEEMEST; THOU GUIDEST THEM THROUGH THY MIGHT TO THY HOLY HABITATION. The divine attributes are indicated here in the same way as in the verse, "Thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hast thy delight in them" (Ps. XLIV, 4). "Thy right hand" corresponds to "thy mercy" and symbolizes *Gedulah* (Greatness); "thine arm", corresponding to "Thou guidest them through Thy might", stands for *Geburah* (Might); and "the light of Thy countenance", corresponding to "Thy holy habitation", indicates the *Ẓaddik* (Righteous One).

FEAR AND DREAD FALL UPON THEM. R. Simeon interpreted the word *aymathah* (dread, instead of the usual *aymah*) as *aymath hé*, "the fear of *Hé*" (i.e. the Shekinah), since there is no letter or word in the Torah that does not contain profound allusions.

THOU WILT BRING AND PLANT THEM IN THE MOUNTAIN OF THINE INHERITANCE. The superfluous *vau* in *tebiemo* and *wetitaemo* ("Thou wilt bring and plant them") is an indication, given by the holy spirit, that these words refer to a later generation of Israelites who were circumcised by Joshua, and in whom the holy sign of the Divine Name was imprinted. They were qualified to inherit the land; for he who is circumcised and in whom the holy sign is revealed, and who guards it from profanation, is called "righteous", and "the righteous will inherit the land" (Isa. LX, 21). Truly, there is not a word or even a small letter in the Torah which does not contain profound allusions and holy indications. Happy is the lot of those who apprehend them!

THE PLACE WHICH THOU HAST MADE FOR THY DWELLING-PLACE, LORD, FOR THE SANCTUARY, LORD, WHICH THY HANDS PREPARED.[1] This implies the necessity of building a sanctuary below, corresponding to the Sanctuary above, wherein the Holy One is daily served and worshipped. Now prayer itself has the character of service, and is called so. A synagogue should be a handsome structure, beautifully decorated, for it is an earthly copy of a heavenly prototype. The Temple below had its counterpart in the Temple above, and everything there, holy vessels and holy ministers, corresponded to something above. The same was true of the Tabernacle which Moses erected in the desert. And a synagogue must have the same object: it must be a true house of prayer. A sanctuary must have windows, as Daniel had in his upper chamber where he prayed (Dan. VI, 11), corresponding to the "windows" in heaven, as it is written: "My beloved . . . he looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice" (S.S. II, 9). We might think that it is more proper to pray in the open air in order to allow the spirit a free ascent. This, however, is not so! There must be a house to correspond to the "House" above. Besides, prayer and the spirit must issue forth from a narrow, limited space, in a straight line towards Jerusalem, [600a] without deviating right or left. This is symbolized by the

[1] This passage, down to "ordinary field" (p. 187), is from the *Ra'ya Mehemna*.

sound of the Shophar, which is thrust forth in a straight line from a narrow opening and breaks through the firmaments in order to stir up the Spirit above. It is true, we are told, that "Isaac did meditate in the field" (Gen. XXIV, 63); but there are special reasons for this; and besides, the field where he prayed was not an ordinary field.

Said R. Abba: 'Happy indeed are those who are worthy to sing this song in this world! They will be found worthy to sing it again in the world to come. This hymn is built up out of twenty-two engraved letters and of ten Words of Creation,[1] and all are inscribed in the Holy Name, and are the completion and harmony of that Name. This, however, has already been explained.' Said R. Simeon: 'When the Israelites stood at the Red Sea and sang, the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to them with all His hosts and chariots, in order that they should know their King who had wrought all those signs and mighty works for them, and that each one of them should perceive of the Divine more than was vouchsafed to any prophet. Should anyone say that they did not know and did not cleave to the Supernal Wisdom, this song that they sang in perfect unison is a proof to the contrary; for how could they, without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have all sung together as if through one mouth? Yea, even the embryos in their mothers' wombs sang it in unison and beheld things that the prophet Ezekiel could not see. They all beheld the Divine glory eye to eye, and when their singing was ended their souls were so filled with joy and ecstasy that they refused to continue on their journey, desiring yet more perfect revelations of that glorious mystery. Then Moses said to the Holy One: "Thy children are loth to depart from the sea, because of their eagerness to behold Thee." What did the Holy One do? He hid His glory and transferred it from there to the wilderness, half disclosing it to them there. Moses bade them many times to proceed, but they refused, until he took hold of them and showed them the light of the glory of the Holy One in the wilderness. Concerning this it is written: "They went out into the

[1] i.e. the thirty-two paths of wisdom.

wilderness of Shur" (v. 22), which, being interpreted, means that they went into the wilderness of "Beholding" (*shur*—to look round).'

AND THEY WENT THREE DAYS IN THE WILDERNESS AND FOUND NO WATER. In Scripture "water" stands as a symbol for the Torah: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (Isa. LV, 1). 'But', remarked R. Jesse, 'the time for the giving of the Torah was not yet, and how could they expect to find this "water" there?' Said R. Eleazar: 'They went out into the wilderness to see the glory of the Holy One, but could not, for He removed it from there. We learn from this that "water" is the symbol of the Torah, and the Holy One and the Torah are one.' Said R. Simeon: 'There in the wilderness a strange power, representing the nations of the world, the ruling spirit of the desert, appeared to them, but they soon discovered that it was not the radiance of their King's glory. Hence it says: AND WHEN THEY CAME TO MARAH THEY COULD NOT DRINK OF THE WATERS OF MARAH, FOR THEY WERE BITTER, and they did not feel the same "sweetness" in their souls as before. Moreover, this power came to act as an accuser against them. Then HE (Moses) CRIED UNTO THE LORD, AND THE LORD SHOWED HIM A TREE, [60b] WHICH, WHEN HE CAST IT INTO THE WATERS, THE WATERS WERE MADE SWEET. The "tree" is a symbol of the Torah, which is "a tree of life to those who lay hold upon her" (Prov. III, 18), and the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are one.' R. Abba said: 'The "Tree" is a direct symbol of the Holy One, for it says: "The tree of the field is (the supernal) Adam" (Deut. XX, 19). The "field" is the "Field of the holy apples". Thus, when the light of their King's glory manifested itself to them, "the waters were made sweet", and the accuser became an intercessor.'

THERE HE MADE FOR THEM A STATUTE AND ORDINANCE. Said R. Abba: 'At first, when the Israelites entered into the Covenant of the Holy One, there was something lacking in them, namely the final act of circumcision, the "*peri'a*", so

that the holy sign was not manifested in them, but as soon as they arrived at this place they entered into both aspects of the holy sign, through the laying bare of its impress. These two aspects are symbolized by the two terms "statute" and "ordinance". AND THERE HE PROVED THEM: by this holy sign. In the book of R. Jesse the Elder there is a recondite interpretation of this tree (which God showed Moses).

AND SAID: IF THOU WILT DILIGENTLY HEARKEN TO THE VOICE OF THE LORD THY GOD. "And said." Who said? As it is not directly stated, it refers to the Holy One, blessed be He. R. Hezekiah pointed to a similar expression in the passage: "And to Moses he said, Go up unto the Lord" (Ex. XXIV, 1). R. Jose said that from the context it is clear to whom the "he said" refers. Why, however, does the text continue, "if thou wilt hear the voice of the Lord thy God", instead of "My voice"? To indicate that voice to communion with which they had attained. R. Abba said: 'When the holy sign was manifested in them they entered into a dual holy state, as has been pointed out above; and having entered into these two holy conditions, they thereby entered into communion with two other holy conditions, so that they should not be deprived of any blessings from above, blessings emanating from the Holy King Himself. All this is indicated in the above verse: "and he said", namely the Holy King; "the voice of the Lord thy God" refers to the Shekinah as representing the Community of Israel; "wilt do what is right in His sight" refers to the *Ẓaddik*; "and will give ear to His commandment" refers to *Neẓaḥ* (Victory), while *Hod* (Majesty) is indicated in the words: "and keep all His statutes". Further, the words "I am the Lord that healeth thee" refer to the Holy King. From this we learn that he who guards the sign of the covenant rises eventually to the perception of the Holy King. R. Isaac said: 'He who is worthy of the perception of *Ẓaddik* is also worthy to perceive *Neẓaḥ* and *Hod*, the triad by which the Community of Israel is blessed; and he who is worthy of these reaches the perception of the Holy King, and so has communion with all four. In correspondence with these four grades the holy

impress (of circumcision) has to be guarded from four things (intercourse with a menstruous woman, a bondwoman, a heathen woman, and a harlot). Once a man cleaves truly to the Holy King, then "I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought against the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee". Observe with what tenderness and loving speeches the Holy One drew Israel to His Torah! He was indeed like unto a father tenderly leading his son to school, promising him good things.' [61a]

AND THE LORD SAID UNTO MOSES, BEHOLD I WILL RAIN BREAD FROM HEAVEN FOR YOU. R. Judah quoted here the verse: *Blessed is he who considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble* (Ps. XLI, 2). 'These words', he said, 'have been applied to a man who is lying dangerously ill. Such a one is a prisoner of the King—his neck yoked and his feet in chains. On either side warders keep guard over him. His limbs war with one another, and he is unable to eat. But in his helplessness a guardian angel is appointed to watch over him and to intercede on his behalf before the King, recalling all his virtues and any good deed that he may have done. Happy is then the counsellor who teaches the afflicted one the way of life so that he may be delivered from judgement and be brought back to his Lord; he becomes an intercessor for him above. And what will be his reward? "The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble".'

R. Hiya said: 'I have often wondered at the words, "For the Lord heareth the poor" (Ps. LXIX, 34). Does He then hear only the poor?' R. Simeon replied: 'These words signify that the poor are indeed nearer to the King than all others, for it is written, "a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. LI, 18) and no one in the world is so broken in heart as the poor man. Mark this! Most human beings appear before the Holy One in body and in soul, but the poor man presents himself before the Throne of the Most High in soul only, and the Holy One is nearer to the soul than to the body.'

At one time there lived in the neighbourhood of R. Jesse a poor man of whom no one took any notice; and to beg he

was ashamed. [61b] One day he fell ill, and R. Jesse went to visit him. And as he sat by the sick man's bedside the Rabbi heard a voice saying: "Wheel,[1] wheel, a soul is flying to me before its rightful time has come! Woe unto his fellow townsmen that none were found among them to sustain him, that he might live!" R. Jesse, having heard these words, stood up and put into the mouth of the sick man the water of a certain herb, bidding him drink; and this made him so to sweat that the illness left him and he recovered. When R. Jesse came again to the house of that poor man the latter said: "By thy life, Rabbi! My soul had actually left my body and was conducted to the Palace of the King and brought before His Throne; and it would fain have remained there for ever, only God desired to give thee the merit of restoring me to life. I heard them proclaim in the highest courts of Heaven: "R. Jesse's spirit shall have its abode in a holy chamber which the members of the Fellowship will occupy at their awakening", and three thrones were prepared for thee and for thy friends.' From that time the neighbours of the poor man looked after him. A similar tale is told of R. Isaac. One day he was walking along the highway when a poor man passed him, having in his hand half a mea (small coin) in silver. He said to R. Isaac: 'Save, I pray thee, my life and the life of my sons and daughters.' Said R. Isaac: 'How can I do this, seeing that I possess no more than half a mea?' 'Nevertheless,' the poor man replied, 'two half meas are better than one.' So R. Isaac took out his coin and gave it to the man. Later, R. Isaac dreamt that he was walking by the sea in a strange place, and some persons wanted to throw him into it, and then he saw R. Simeon stretching out his hand to him, and the poor man whom he had assisted came up and pulled him out, and brought him safe and sound to R. Simeon. When he awoke, the verse: "Blessed is he who considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble" came automatically to his lips.

Every day dew from the Holy Ancient One drops into the "Lesser Countenance" and all the holy apple-fields are blessed. It also descends to those below, and it provides

[1] i.e. the wheel of destiny.

spiritual food for the holy angels, to each rank according to its capacity of perception. It was this food of which the Israelites partook in the wilderness: "each of them ate the food of celestial princes" (*abirim*) (Ps. LXVIII, 26). Said R. Simeon: 'Even at this time there are those who partake of similar food, and that in a double measure. And who are they? Fellows of the mystic lore, who study the Torah day and night. See now, when the Israelites went out of Egypt into the desert, uniting themselves with the Holy King, when the sign of the Covenant was manifested in them in its fulness, they were granted a more spiritual, more supernal food than the "unleavened bread" which they ate immediately after they left Egypt; for of the manna it says: "I will rain bread from heaven for you." It was indeed heavenly food, emanating from the sphere called "heaven". But the sons of Wisdom, namely, the students of the Torah, derive their nourishment from a still higher region, the sphere of Wisdom, as it is written: "Wisdom keeps alive her owners" (Eccl. VII, 12).' 'If that is so,' asked R. Eleazar, 'why are they more frail than ordinary men?' R. Simeon replied: 'That is a good question, and the answer is as follows. Ordinary food, by which the majority of people are nourished, is constituted of the elements of heaven and earth, and is therefore of a gross, material quality; the unleavened bread, which was eaten by the Israelites when they left Egypt, emanated from the sphere of "Judgement" and was somewhat subtler in quality; the manna was a still finer food, emanating from the sphere of "Heaven", and was assimilated by the soul more than by the body—"angels' bread"; but the food of those absorbed in the Torah nourishes only the soul and the spirit, but not the body, coming as it does from the sphere of "Wisdom", from the highest and most glorious supernal region. Hence it is hardly to be wondered at that Wisdom's children are more frail than other men, for they do not eat the food of the body at all. [62a] Truly, "Wisdom keeps alive her owners"! Blessed is that body which can derive benefit from the food of the soul!' R. Eleazar thereupon remarked: 'It is indeed so, but where do we find these foods in our days?' R. Simeon replied: 'This is also a good question,

and the real answer is this. First, there is the food for the whole of humanity, natural food for ordinary men. Then there is the food which emanates from the sphere of "righteousness" (*ẓedek*), the food of the poor, which is turned into "beneficence" (*ẓedakah*), both to him who gives and to him who receives: "righteousness" is turned into "mercy" (*ḥesed*), and "a man of mercy does good to his own soul" (Prov. XI, 17). A more supernal food is the one by which sick people are nourished, the food of the Holy One, as it says: "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing" (Ps. XLI, 4)—as it were sacrificial food, concerning which it says, "To sacrifice unto me fat and blood" (Ezek. XLIV, 15). Then there is the food of spirits and souls, a supernal, holy, and precious food, emanating from the "Pleasantness of the Lord". The subtlest and most precious food, however, is, as I have said, that by which the students devoted to the Torah are sustained; for the Torah emanates from the sphere of the Supernal Wisdom, and those whose minds are centred in her enter into the very essence of Wisdom, and their nourishment is derived from that holy source.' Then came R. Eleazar and kissed R. Simeon's hand, and said: 'I am truly blessed to hear such words! Blessed are the righteous who meditate on the Torah day and night! Blessed are they in this world, and blessed are they in the world to come! Truly, "He is thy life and the length of thy days" (Deut. XXX, 20).'

BEHOLD, I WILL RAIN BREAD FROM HEAVEN FOR YOU. R. Jose meditated here on the verse: "Thou openest thine hand and satisfiest every living thing according to thy will" (Ps. CXLV, 16). 'In the preceding verse,' he said, 'it is written: "The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season". All living beings wait upon, and lift up their eyes to the Holy One for food, but the "sons of Faith" must not merely wait, but also pray for their daily bread. Such prayer has the power of bringing blessing every day upon the Tree whence all nourishment for body and soul emanates. Thus even when he has a sufficiency of food, a man of faith ought to pray for "daily bread" in order that

through him there may be each day an increase of blessing in heaven, and this is the meaning of the words, "Blessed be the Lord by day". For this reason it is not right to cook food on one day for the next, so that one day should not interfere with another in regard to blessings above. Therefore it says concerning the manna: "The people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day" (Ex. XVI, 4); except on the sixth day, when they prepared for the Sabbath (*Ibid.* 5). Prayer for daily bread secures the favour of the Holy Ancient One, so that food is distributed to all, and the one who prays thus is indeed a "faithful son", a son through whose co-operation blessings are found in heaven. R. Abba dwelt on the verse: "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that wait for his mercy" (Ps. CXLVII, 11). 'How much should one endeavour to walk in the way of the Holy King and in the ways of the Torah, in order to become the medium of blessing to all, to those above and to those below! [62b] For the Lord dispenses favour (*rugeh eth*) to them that fear Him, and those who fear Him are those "that wait for His mercy", that is, who are entirely dependent on Him for their daily bread.' R. Jesse the Elder never used to prepare his meal before praying for it. He was wont to say: 'Let us ask the King first!' Then he would wait for some time and say: 'The time has arrived for the King to give us food; prepare the meal!' This is the way of those who fear the Lord and are afraid of sin. As for the ungodly, it is not so with them, for their ways are crooked: "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink" (Isa. V, 11). But "The Lord taketh pleasure . . . in those that wait for His mercy"; and herein are the sons of faith different from others. Hence it is written: "The people shall gather a certain rate every day in his day, that I may prove them whether they will walk in my Torah or not." The peculiar expression "in his day" indicates that the sons of faith are known by their "daily" walking in the straight way of the Torah. R. Isaac found the same truth in the following verse: "The righteous eateth to the satisfaction of his soul" (Prov. XIII, 25), which he interpreted to mean: "The righteous has his meal only after he has satisfied his soul with prayer and

study." Said R. Simeon: 'Observe that before the Holy One gave Israel the Torah He tried them to see who would be a son of faith and who would not be. How did He try them? By the manna. All those who were found to be sons of faith were signed with the sign of the crown of Grace by the Holy One Himself; and from those who were not found to be thus, this supernal crown was withheld.

'It has been said at that hour Israel was perfected below according to her prototype above, for it is written, "and they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water and three-score and ten palm trees" (Ex. XV, 27). Now the Holy Tree[1] spreads to twelve boundaries on the four quarters of the earth, and to seventy branches closely intertwined, so that what was above should have here its counterpart below. At that hour holy dew dropped down from the Hidden Most Ancient One and filled the head of the Lesser Countenance, the place which is called "Heaven". From this dew of the supernal holy light the manna descended, and in so doing dispersed itself into flakes and became solidified "as thin as the hoar frost on the ground" (Ex. XVI, 14). And all the sons of the Faith went out, gathered it, and praised the Holy Name for it. The manna diffused the scents of all the spices of the Garden of Eden, through which it had passed in descending. Each one found in the manna the taste he most desired; and as he ate he blessed the Supernal Holy King for His goodness, and was himself blessed with understanding of the Supernal Wisdom. Therefore that generation was called "the generation of knowledge". These were the sons of Faith, and to them was given the privilege of contemplating and comprehending the holy Torah. But of those who were not truly faithful it is written, "and the people roamed about (*shatu*) and gathered (the manna)" (Num. XI, 8). The word "*shatu*" (roamed about) indicates that these people allowed "stupidity" (*shatuta*) to enter into them, because they were not sons of Faith. And what do we read of them? "And they ground it in mills or beat it in a mortar" (*Ibid.*). Why should they have gone to all this trouble? [63a] Merely because they were not sons of Faith. They are the

[1] *Tifereth.*

prototypes of all those who have no faith in the Holy One, blessed be He, and have no desire to meditate on His ways: they likewise labour day and night for food, in fear that they may be short of bread—all because they are not of the faithful. Thus "the people roamed about and gathered" and "ground it", making diverse foolish efforts and labouring greatly. And what did all their trouble avail them? Only this: "and the taste of it was the taste of fresh oil" (*Ibid.*). No other flavour rewarded them. Why? Because they were not sons of Faith. As to the actual taste of the manna, some say it was of paste mixed with oil; some, that it was only like paste in that it could be variously moulded and pounded; R. Judah said that it was indeed only the flavour of fresh oil.'

R. Isaac said: 'It is written: GATHER OF IT EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS EATING (*okhlo*). Did, then, the one who ate little gather little, and the one who ate much gather much? Is it not written, "he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack" (Ex. XXVI, 18)? The term "*okhlo*", however, signifies that they gathered according to the number of the consumers. It was in this way. Two men would dispute concerning a servant, each one saying that she or he was his, and they would take their controversy to Moses that he might decide it. He would say to each: "How many persons have you in your family?" and having ascertained this, he commanded: "To-morrow let everyone gather the manna according to the number of his people, and bring it all to me." Next morning they would come to Moses, and he counted for every person of each house an omer; having done which he found that one of the disputants had yet another omer over and above those which were the portion of the number of his household, which proved that the servant was his. Hence it says: "An omer for every man, according to the number of your persons" (v. 12).'

AT EVEN THEN YE SHALL KNOW . . . . Said R. Jose: 'How were they to *know*? We may explain as follows. It has been taught that every day the judgements of the Holy One, blessed be He, are manifested, and in the morning Grace

predominates in the world, but at the time called "evening" Justice rules in the world, and for this reason, as we have learnt, Isaac instituted the afternoon prayer. Therefore it says: "In the evening ye shall know"; that is, when Judgement is awakened in the world you shall know that by the power of that Judgement God has brought you out from the land of Egypt; whereas "in the morning ye shall perceive the glory of the Lord", for all that time Grace is awakened in the world, and shall indeed bring down food for you, and "ye shall be given food to eat".' Said R. Hiya: 'Not so! The true meaning of the passage is the opposite, viz. that when the children of Israel said, "when we sat by the flesh pots, etc." (Ex. XVI, 3), then was awakened the attribute of Justice, symbolized by the "evening"; but nevertheless Grace also awakened with it, as it says, "ye shall know that the Lord brought you out of the land of Egypt", i.e. you shall know the Grace He showed you in the hour of judgement by bringing you out of Egypt. "In the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord"; and we know what is meant by "Glory". And why all this? For that He heareth your murmurings against the Lord.' Said R. Jose: 'The Holy One does not alter His judgements; it is the wicked in the world who turn Mercy to Judgement, as we have already made clear.' R. Eleazar taught that in the coming age the righteous shall eat of this manna, but of a much higher quality, a quality which was never seen in this world, as it is written: "To behold the beauty of the Lord and to visit his Temple" (Ps. XXVII, 4); "Eye hath not seen . . . what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him" (Isa. LXIV, 4).

R. Hezekiah discoursed on the verse: "A song of degrees. Out of the depth have I cried unto thee" (Ps. CXXX, 1, 2). 'This Psalm', he said, 'is anonymous, because [63b] all men can apply it to themselves in all generations. Whoever prays before the Holy King must do so from the depths of his soul so that his heart may be wholly turned to God and his whole mind be concentrated upon his prayer. David had already said "I seek thee with my whole heart" (Ps. CXIX, 10). Why, then, should he now go further and say "out of the depths"? The reason is that when a man prays before

the King he should concentrate mind and heart on the source of all sources, in order to draw blessings from the depth of the "Cistern", from the source of all life, from the "stream coming out of Eden" (Gen. II, 19), which "maketh glad the city of God" (Ps. XLVI, 5). Prayer is the drawing of this blessing from above to below; for when the Ancient One, the All-hidden, wishes to bless the universe, He lets His gifts of Grace congregate in that supernal depth, from where they are to be drawn, through human prayer, into the "Cistern", so that all the streams and brooks may be filled therefrom.'

AND MOSES SAID UNTO THEM, LET NO MAN LEAVE OF IT UNTIL THE MORNING. R. Judah said: 'Every day the world is blessed through that superior day, the Seventh. For the six Days receive blessing from the seventh, and each dispenses the blessing so received on its own day, but not on the next. Hence the Israelites were commanded not to leave of the manna till the morning. The sixth day has more blessing than the rest, for on this day, as R. Eleazar has said, the Shekinah prepares the table for the King. Hence the sixth day has two portions, one for itself and one in preparation for the joy of the union of the King with the Shekinah, which takes place on Sabbath night, and from which all the six days of the week derive their blessing. For that reason the table has to be prepared on the Sabbath night, so that when the blessings descend from above they may find something on which to rest, as it were, for "no blessing rests on an empty table". Those who are aware of this mystery of the union of the Holy One with the Shekinah on Sabbath night consider, therefore, this time the most appropriate one for their own marital union.'

SEE FOR THAT THE LORD HATH GIVEN YOU THE SABBATH. What is the meaning of the word "Sabbath"? The day in which all the other days rest, the day which comprises the other days, and from which they derive blessing. R. Jose said: 'The Community of Israel is also called "Sabbath", for she is God's spouse. That is why the Sabbath is called

"Bride", and it is written, "Ye shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy unto you" (Ex. XXXI, 13): it is holy to you, but not to other nations; "it is a sign between me and the children of Israel" (*Ibid.* V, 17): it is Israel's eternal heritage.'

ABIDE YE EVERY MAN IN HIS PLACE, LET NO MAN GO OUT OF HIS PLACE ON THE SEVENTH DAY. This "place" is the "Place" where it is right to walk. The inner meaning of the word is as in the verse: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Ex. III, 5): the noted Place (i.e. stage of contemplation) where one is aware of the Supernal Glory. Therefore when man adorns himself with the supernal holy Crown (i.e. celebrates the Sabbath), he must take great care not to utter any word which might [64a] profane the Sabbath, and similarly to guard his hands and also his feet, so as not to walk beyond the permissible limit of the two thousand cubits. Again, the "place" here refers to the glorious Place of Holiness, outside of which are "strange gods". "Blessed be the glory of the Lord" is the *Supernal* Glory; "from His place" is the *terrestrial* Glory. This is the secret of the Sabbatic Crown. Therefore: "let no man go out of his place on the seventh day". Blessed is the lot of him who is worthy of the glory of the Sabbath: blessed in this world and blessed in the world to come.

AND THE LORD SAID UNTO MOSES, GO ON BEFORE THE PEOPLE AND TAKE WITH THEE, ETC. R. Hiya began his interpretation by quoting the following verse: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them" (Ps. XXXIV, 8). He said: 'Blessed are the righteous, in that the Holy One is more concerned for their honour than for His own! See how He ignores those who scorn and blaspheme the Supernal! Sanherib, for instance, said: "Who are they among the gods of the countries . . . that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?" (2 Kings XVIII, 35), and yet the Holy One exacted no requital from him; but as soon as he stretched out his hand against Hezekiah "the angel of the Lord smote

in the camp of the Assyrians" (*Ibid.* v, 19). Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, worshipped heathen gods, brought incense and sacrificed to them, and yet God did not requite him for his sin ; but when Iddo the prophet came to warn him, and Jeroboam stretched out his hand against him, then "his hand which he put up against him dried up and he could not pull it in again to him" (1 Kings XIII, 4). Pharaoh scorned and blasphemed, and said: "Who is the Lord ?" (Ex. v, 2), but the Holy One did not punish him until he refused to let Israel go, as it is written: "As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people . . . Behold to-morrow at this time I will cause it, etc. (Ex. IX, 17). And so it is always the case that the Holy One avenges the insult done to the righteous more than one offered to Himself. Here, however, when Moses said "They be almost ready to stone me" (Ex. XVII, 4), God said to him: "Moses, now is not the time to exact reparation for the insult done to thee. However, go before the people, and I shall see who will stretch out his hand against thee ! Art thou in their power or in mine ? "

AND THE ROD WHEREWITH THOU SMOTEST THE RIVER TAKE IN THINE HAND. The rod was to be taken because it was inscribed with miracles, and the Holy Name was impressed on it.

BEHOLD, I WILL STAND BEFORE THEE THERE UPON THE ROCK. This "rock" is the same as the one mentioned in the verse: "The rock, perfect is his work" (Deut. XXXII, 4); and, as the rod had formerly been a serpent, Moses here knew "the way of a serpent upon a rock" (Prov. XXX, 19). Said R. Judah: 'If that is so, what are we to make of the next words: "and thou shalt smite the rock and there shall come water out of it" (*Ibid.*) ?' R. Hiya replied: 'Certainly it is so. Of all the names of the Holy One, blessed be He, there is not one which does not effect signs and wonders, producing all that the world needs.' 'But does it not say,' objected R. Judah, ' "Behold, he smote the rock, and the waters gushed out" (Ps. CV, 41) ?' R. Hiya replied: 'A strong hammer is known by the sparks it produces (i.e. a sharp mind is

recognized by the problems it raises), and dost thou ask such a question ? Listen. Everywhere "rock" symbolizes "*Geburah*" (Force), and when the Holy One wishes to wound and to smite, this "*Geburah*" is awakened and it is this that executes the act. Hence, we read: "The Rock smote, and the waters gushed out." Without this the waters would not have gushed out.' 'But,' said R. Judah, 'is it not written, "The Rock that begat thee thou hast neglected", or, as we interpret, "weakened" (Deut. XXXII, 18) ?' R. Hiya replied: 'Surely ! For if sinners knew that this Rock was going to be awakened and punish them, they would not sin; it is, however, weak in their estimation because they do not contemplate it nor observe its ways.'

R. Abba said: 'There are two Rocks: from the Supernal Rock emanates a lower Rock. That is to say, from the side of the "Mother" comes "Strength" (*Geburah*), as R. Eleazar has said, that, although the Supernal Mother does not in Herself signify Judgement, yet judgement issues from Her side, since [64b] *Geburah* emanates from her. Therefore She is called "Supernal Rock". And in the same verse the words, "And hast forgotten God that formed thee" refer to the brightness of the Father, viz. the Supernal Grace.'

R. Abba further said: 'We know that "water" everywhere symbolizes God's kindness, "Grace", and yet the Holy One, blessed be He, on this occasion caused water to come from the "Rock" (the symbol of Judgement), though it ought to be connected with "Greatness" (=Grace). In this, however, consisted the "sign" and wonder of the Holy One: "Who turned the Rock into a pool" (Ps. CXIV, 8). "Turned" suggests that it is not the usual function of the rock to produce water. Therefore He caused water to come from the place below by means of the Supernal Rock. And what is the name of the place below ? "*Sela'*", for it is written: "And thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock (*sela'*)" (Num. XX, 8). And wherewith did this *sela'* bring forth water ? By the power of the Supernal Rock.'

R. Simeon said: 'Moses in his Song first said "The rock, perfect is his work" (Deut. XXXII, 4), referring to the occasion when water issued from the rock, doing the work of him who

was called "perfect", namely Abraham (Gen. XVII, 1), who symbolizes Grace. But on the second occasion, when Moses tried to bring forth water from that rock (Num. XX), it did not turn to "perfection", because of Israel's sins; and in reference to this Moses said: "The Rock that begat thee thou hast weakened" (Deut. XXXII, 15), meaning, "thou hast weakened it from what it was to thee before; it does not now represent 'perfection' but 'judgement'; it is not now what it was when thou wast begotten as a people".'

Said R. Abba:' What did the Israelites mean when they said: IS THE LORD AMONG US OR NOT (*ain*, lit. nothing)? Were they so blind as not to know that He was in their midst? Did not the Shekinah encompass them and the clouds of glory surround them? Had they not seen the radiance of their King's glorious majesty at the sea? It is, however, as R. Simeon explained, that they desired to know whether the Divine manifestation which they had experienced was that of the Ancient One, the All-hidden One, the Transcendent, whose designation is *Ayin* (Nought), because He is above comprehension, or of the "Small Countenance", the Immanent designated YHVH. Hence the word "*ayin*" (nothing) is used here instead of "*lo*" (not). If so, it may be asked, why were they punished? Because they differentiated between these two aspects in God and "tempted the Lord"; for they said to themselves: "If it is the One, we shall pray in one way, and if it is the Other, we shall pray in another way".'

'THEN CAME AMALEK AND FOUGHT WITH ISRAEL IN REPHIDIM. R. Jose quoted in connection with this the following verse: *Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass* (Isa. XXXII, 20). 'Water', he said, 'has many symbolic meanings: there are many kinds of water. Blessed are the Israelites who "sow beside *the* water"—the water which is under the branches of the Holy One's Tree, a Tree great and mighty, containing food for the whole universe. This Tree is encompassed by twelve frontiers and adjoins all four sides of the world, and has seventy branches, and Israel is in the "body" of the

Tree, and the seventy branches encompass her. This is symbolized by the "twelve wells of water and the threescore and ten palm trees", as we have often explained. But what do the words "and they encamped there by the water" signify? This. At that time the Israelites had control over the waters which are under the branches of that Tree, those which are called "the insolent waters" (Ps. CXXIV, 5). And this is the meaning of the words, "blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass", namely, the two "Crowns of the Left", to which are attached the pagan nations who are called "ox and ass". When the Israelites are worthy, then they dismiss these evil powers, and they have no dominion over them.' Said R. Abba: 'When the two (i.e. the ox and the ass) are united, the inhabitants of the world cannot stand up against them. For this reason [65a] it is prohibited to "plough with an ox and an ass together" (Deut. XXII, 10). From them, when united, emanates the power, called "dog", which is more insolent than all of them. Said the Holy One, blessed be He: "Ye said, 'is the Lord in our midst or not?' Behold, I will deliver you to the dog!", and straightway came Amalek.'

R. Judah said: 'It is written, "Amalek is the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever" (Num. XXIV, 20). Was, then, Amalek the first of the nations? Were there not many tribes, nations, and peoples in the world before Amalek came? But the meaning is that Amalek was the first nation who feared not to proclaim war against Israel, as it says, "and he feared not God" (Deut. XXIV, 18); whilst the other nations were filled with fear and trembling before Israel at the time of the Exodus, as it says: "The peoples heard and were afraid; trembling took hold of the inhabitants of Pelesheth" (Ex. XV, 14); in fact, apart from Amalek there was no nation that was not awestruck before the mighty works of the Holy One, blessed be He. Therefore "his latter end shall be that he perish for ever".'

Said R. Eleazar: 'Observe that although the "Rock" (i.e. *Geburah*, Severity) dealt graciously with them in supplying them with water, yet it did not cease to perform its natural function, so that "Amalek came".'

R. Abba discoursed on the verse: *There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt*" (Eccl. v, 13). ' "There is a sore evil." Are there then two kinds of evil, one that is sore, and another that is not sore? Yes, indeed! There is a particularly sore evil, for we have a tradition that from the Side of the Left emanate many emissaries of punishment who go down to the hollow of the great Sea, and then emerge in a body and, cleaving the air, advance upon the sons of men. Each one of them is called "evil", and it is to this that the words "there shall no evil befall thee" (Ps. xc, 10) refer. When a certain one of these "evils" befalls a man, it makes him miserly with his money, so that when a collector for charity or a poor man comes to him it strikes his hand saying, "do not impoverish yourself". It will not even let him buy food for himself. In fact, from the moment that that "evil" comes upon the man, he is "sore" like a sick man who can neither eat nor drink. King Solomon proclaimed in his wisdom: "There is an evil which I have seen under the sun . . . A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him no power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it" (Eccl. vi, 1–2). On the surface, the end of this verse would appear to contradict the beginning: if God has given him riches, etc., how can we say that he has no power over it? The meaning, however, is that he has no power over that "evil" to which he clings and entrusts himself, and therefore he is like a sick man who does not eat, nor drink, and he keeps his money tight until he leaves this world and another man comes and takes possession of it, and becomes its master.' We may also explain the verse as follows. When a young man who lives at ease in his father's house begins to make [65*b*] all sorts of complaints and demands, saying, "I want this, and I do not want that", he attaches himself to that "sore evil", and he will be punished both in this world and in the world to come. Concerning such a case, King Solomon said: "There is a sore evil . . . riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt." Such was the case of the Israelites: the Holy One, blessed be He, carried them on

eagles' wings, encircled them with the clouds of glory, made the Shekinah go before them, gave them manna to eat, and sweet water to drink, and yet they complained! Hence, "and Amalek came".

R. Simeon said: 'There is a deep allusion in the name "Rephidim". This war emanated from the attribute of Severe Judgement and it was a war above and a war below. The Holy One, as it were, said: "when Israel is worthy below My power prevails in the universe; but when Israel is found to be unworthy she weakens My power above, and the power of severe judgement predominates in the world.' So here, "Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim", because the Israelites were "weak" (*raphe*) in the study of the Torah, as we have explained on another occasion.'

AND MOSES SAID UNTO JOSHUA, CHOOSE US OUT MEN, AND GO OUT, FIGHT WITH AMALEK. Why did Moses abstain from fighting the first battle which God Himself commanded? Because he was able to divine the true meaning of his Master's command. Hence he said: "I will prepare myself for the war above, and thou, Joshua, prepare thyself for the war below." This is the meaning of the words: "When Moses lifted up his hand, Israel prevailed" (*Ibid.* v, 11), namely Israel above. Therefore Moses did not participate in the war on earth, so that he might throw himself with greater zeal into the war in Heaven, and thus promote victory on earth. Said R. Simeon: 'Let us not think lightly of this war with Amalek. Verily, from the creation of the world until then, and since then till the coming of the Messiah, there has been and will be no war like that, nor can even the war of Gog and Magog be compared with it; and this not because of the mighty armies taking part in it, but because it was launched against all the attributes of the Holy One, blessed be He.'

AND MOSES SAID TO JOSHUA. Why to him, who was then but a "youth" (Ex. xxxiii, 11)? Were there in Israel no greater warriors than Joshua? The reason was that Moses in his wisdom was aware that it was not going to be merely a

battle against flesh and blood, but against Samael, who was coming down to assist Amalek. Now Joshua, "the youth", had reached at that time a high degree of spiritual perception, not, indeed, as high as Moses, who was united with the Shekinah, but his soul was, in fact, attached to the supernal region called "Youth" (=Metatron). [66a] Now when Moses perceived that Samael was going to fight for Amalek, he thought: "this young man, Joshua, will surely stand against him and prevail", and therefore he said unto him: "go and fight against Amalek! It is thy battle, the battle here below, and I will prepare myself for the battle above. Choose worthy men, righteous and the sons of the righteous, to accompany thee".' Said R. Simeon: 'At the moment when Joshua, the "young man", started out to fight Amalek, the "Young Man" above was stirred, and was equipped with weapons prepared by his "Mother" (the Shekinah) for the battle, in order to "avenge the covenant" (cf. Lev. XXVI, 25) with the "sword" (EX. XVII, 13). Moses equipped himself for the war above. "His hands were heavy" (*Ibid.* V, 12), that is to say, "weighty, honourable, holy hands", that had never been defiled, hands worthy to wage the war above. AND THEY TOOK A STONE AND PUT IT UNDER HIM AND HE SAT THEREON: to participate in the distress of Israel. AND AARON AND HUR STAYED UP HIS HANDS, THE ONE ON THE ONE SIDE, AND THE OTHER ON THE OTHER SIDE: AND HIS HANDS WERE STEADY (*emunah*, lit. faith). This cannot be taken in the literal sense; what it means is that Aaron represented his "side" (the attribute of Grace), Hur his "side" (the attribute of Strength), and Moses' hands between the two represented Faith.

AND IT CAME TO PASS THAT WHEN MOSES HELD UP HIS HAND, ISRAEL PREVAILED, AND WHEN HE LET DOWN HIS HAND, AMALEK PREVAILED. "Hand" here refers to the right hand, which he held up above the left, and so long as he did so, Israel, i.e. the Supernal Israel, prevailed; but when Israel below ceased praying Moses could not keep his hand up and "Amalek prevailed". From which we derive the lesson that, although the priest spreads out his

hands at the sacrifice to make his mediation complete, yet Israel must co-operate with him in prayer.

AND THE LORD SAID UNTO MOSES, WRITE THIS FOR A MEMORIAL IN THE BOOK, ETC. Note that in the previous verse it says, "And Joshua disabled (*vayahlosh*) Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword." Why is the word "disabled" used here instead of "slew"? Because the word *halash* has also another meaning, namely, "to cast lots" (cf. Isa. XIV, 2). Joshua did indeed first cast lots,[1] and then the sword, executing the vengeance of the covenant, slew them. WRITE THIS FOR A MEMORIAL: "this" in the first place, AND REHEARSE IT IN THE EARS OF JOSHUA, namely, that he is destined to slay other kings.

FOR I WILL UTTERLY BLOT OUT (lit. for blotting out I will blot out); that is, both their celestial forces and their power here below: similarly THE REMEMBRANCE of them on high as well as below. Said R. Isaac: 'Here it is written: "For *I* will utterly blot out", whereas in another passage it says, "*Thou* shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek" (Deut. XXV, 19). The Holy One, blessed be He, said in effect: "Ye shall blot out his remembrance on earth, and I will blot out his remembrance on high".' R. Jose said: 'Amalek brought with him other peoples, but all the rest were afraid to commence war against Israel. Hence Joshua cast lots which of them to slay.'

AND MOSES BUILT AN ALTAR AND CALLED THE NAME OF IT YHVH NISSI (the Lord is my sign). He built an altar below to correspond to the Altar above. [66b] R. Jose said: 'The altar was intended to bring atonement and forgiveness to them. "He called the name", namely the name of the altar, "YHVH NISSI", just as Jacob called the altar which he built *El Elohe Yisroel*, "the God, the God of Israel" (Gen. XXXIII, 20).' He meant to indicate that the miracle was wrought for them because they had been properly circumcised, so that the sign of the Covenant was

[1] i.e. as to which of the multitude of nations that Amalek brought with him (*vide infra*) should first be put to the sword.

visibly imprinted upon them. Hence we learn that when a father performs the act of circumcision on his son, revealing the impress of the sign of the holy Covenant, the sacrificial act is, as it were, an altar of propitiation.

R. Jose said: 'How are we to understand the words, "and they saw the God of Israel" (Ex. XXIV, 10)? Who can see the Holy One? Is it not written: "No man can see Me and live"? It means that a rainbow appeared above them in radiant colours resplendent with the beauty of His grace. Therefore the saying that he who gazes at a rainbow gazes, as it were, at the Shekinah. For the same reason it is not right to look at the fingers of the priests when they spread out their hands to bless the people (the Shekinah "showing Herself through the lattice", i.e. through the priests' fingers).' R. Jose further said: 'They saw the light of the Shekinah, namely him who is called "the Youth" (Metratron-Henoch), and who ministers to the Shekinah in the heavenly Sanctuary. As for the "paved work of a sapphire brick" mentioned in the same verse, this was an impression of one of the bricks with which the Egyptians "embittered" the lives of the children of Israel (Ex. I, 14). There is a story concerning a Hebrew woman in Egypt who, when a child was born to her, being in fear of Pharaoh's decree, hid him under a brick. Then a hand was stretched out, took hold of the brick, and placed it under the "feet" of the Shekinah. There it remained until the earthly Temple was burned down. It is concerning this that it is written in the book of Lamentations (II, 1): "He remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger." Said R. Hiya: "The radiance of the Sapphire extended towards seventy-two sides' (in accordance with the seventy-two Divine Names). [67a]

THE LORD WILL HAVE WAR WITH AMALEK FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. R. Judah said: 'There never was a generation of men, nor ever will be, in this world without this evil seed, and the Holy One, blessed be He, carries on His war against it. Of such it is written: "Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Hallelujah!" (Ps. CIV, 35).'

JETHRO

Ex. XVIII, 1–XX, 26

NOW JETHRO, THE PRIEST OF MIDIAN, MOSES' FATHER-IN-LAW, HEARD OF ALL THAT GOD HAD DONE FOR MOSES AND FOR ISRAEL. R. Hezekiah opened here with a discourse on the verse: *And Aaron lifted up his hand*[1] *toward the people and blessed them* (Lev. IX, 22). 'The use of the word "hand" here', he said, 'in the singular indicates that he meant to lift up his right hand above his left; and this for a certain esoteric reason. We find, namely, in the book of King Solomon, that he who lifts up his hand towards heaven without any devotional intention to utter prayer or blessing will be cursed by ten celestial powers, the "ten potentates which are found in the city" (Eccl. VII, 19), namely, the ten supernal beings who are appointed over the "spreading of hands", to receive the blessings or prayers offered therewith, and to endow them with a power through which the holy name[2] is glorified and blessed from below. And when, through the "spreading of hands", the name is blessed from below, it receives blessings from above also, and is thus glorified from all sides. And these "ten potentates" will then take of the blessings above, and pour them down upon him who is below. Therefore when man lifts up his hand to heaven, he must be careful that his intention should be to pray or bless or supplicate, for if he lifts them idly, [a] those powers that brood over the "spreading of hands" will curse him with two hundred and forty-eight curses. Of such a one it is written: "As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him" (Ps. CIX, 17). Moreover, the spirit of impurity rests on such hands, for it is wont to hover over an empty spot, and blessing does not rest there. Thus the hand must be lifted up to heaven only as an expression of prayer or of blessing. Indeed, this "spreading of hands" has a profound symbolical significance. When a man spreads out his hands and lifts them up in prayer and supplication, he may be said

[1] So the *k'tib*. [2] *Adonai*. [3] i.e. for cursing.

to glorify the Holy One in various ways. He symbolically[1] unites the ten Words (Sefiroth), thereby unifying the whole and duly blessing the Holy Name. He also, as it were, unites the inner Chariots and the outer Chariots, so that the Holy Name may be blessed from all sides, and all become one, both that which is above and that which is below. The ten powers of which we spake are the lower ten Words (Sefiroth), symbolized by the inscribed letters corresponding to those above, and they have charge, in the first instance, of the raising of the [67b] fingers in prayer. And when the whole side of holiness is united above, the "other sides" are subdued, and they also confess and praise the Holy King.

'Observe this. In the mystic doctrine of the Holy Name we speak of King and Priest, both above and below. The King above is the mystic Holy of Holies,[2] and under him there is a Priest, the mystic Primeval Light, who ministers before him; he is the priest who is called "great" and is stationed at the right hand. There is a King below, in the likeness of the King above, who is king over all that is below; and under him there is a Priest who ministers to him: this is he whom we call Michael, the High Priest, who is at the right hand. All this constitutes the true object of faith, that of the side of holiness. On the "other side", the side which is not holy, there is also a king, the one who is called "an old king and a fool" (Eccl. IV, 13), and the priest, who is under him and ministers to him, is On (=*aven*, nothingness, idolatry); he is alluded to in the verse: "And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out power", namely, the celestial unholy power which presided over the act of idolatry committted by Jeroboam (1 Kings XII, 28), without which he would not have been able to succeed. Now, when this king and this priest of the "other side" are subdued, and their power broken, all the "other sides" follow suit, and are also subdued and broken, and acknowledge the sovereignty of the Holy One, and in this way He alone rules above and below, as it is written: "And the Lord alone will be exalted in that day" (Isa. II, 11). In just the same way God broke here on earth the power of an "old and foolish

[1] Because the pair of hands contain ten fingers. [2] *Binah*.

king", namely Pharaoh, who, when Moses said to him, "The God of the Hebrews hath met with us", replied, "I know not the Lord," but when the Holy One, desiring that His Name should be glorified on earth as it is in heaven, punished him and his people, he came and acknowledged the Holy One. Subsequently his priest also, namely Jethro, the priest of *On*, i.e. idolatry, was also humbled, so that he came and acknowledged the Holy One, saying: "Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you. . . . Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods . . ." (Ex. XVIII, 10, 11). So when that king and that priest acknowledged the Holy One, blessed be He, and were humbled before Him, He was exalted above and below, and then, and then only, did He give forth the Torah, as undisputed sovereign over all.'

R. Eleazar meditated on the words of the Psalm: "God be merciful unto us" (Ps. LXVII). Said he:[1] 'King David rose and praised and thanked the Holy King. He was studying the Torah at the moment when the north wind rose and touched the strings of his harp, so that it made music. Now, what was the song of the harp? See now. When the Holy One moves towards the chariots and the hosts to give nourishment to all those supernal beings—as it is written, "She (the Shekinah) riseth while it is yet night and giveth food to her household and a portion to her maidens" (Prov. XXXI, 15)—all are filled with joy and song. They begin their hymning with the words: "God be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us"; and the north wind, when it awakens and breathes upon the world, sings: "That thy way may be known upon earth, thy salvation among all nations"; and the harp, when it is played upon by that wind, sings: "Let all peoples praise Thee, O God; let all the peoples praise Thee." As for David, when he was awakened and the Holy Spirit moved him, he sang: "Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our God, shall bless us; God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him." This he sang so as to draw down the goodness of the Holy One from above to the earth below. Later David arranged all these songs into one psalm. The song of the

[1] There appears to be a lacuna here in the text.

harp ("Let all peoples praise thee") signifies that when the heathen nations acknowledge the Holy One, His glory is consummated above and below. [68a] When Pharaoh acknowledged Him by saying: "The Lord is the righteous" (Ex. IX, 27), all other kings had to follow suit: "Then the dukes of Edom were terrified" (*Ibid.* XVI, 15); for Pharaoh was then the overlord of the whole world. Then came Jethro, that great and supreme priest of the whole pagan world, and confessed his faith in the Holy One, saying, "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods"; then the Holy One was exalted in His glory above and below, and then it was that he gave the Torah in the completeness of his dominion.'

Said R. Simeon to R. Eleazar, his son: 'Concerning this, it is written: "Let all peoples praise thee, O Lord; let all peoples praise thee." Then R. Eleazar came and kissed his hand. But R. Abba wept and said: 'A father pitieth his children. Who will pity R. Eleazar and bring his words to completion except he have the Master's pity? How happy can we consider ourselves that we were privileged to hear these words so that we shall not be ashamed of our ignorance in the world to come!'

R. Abba continued: 'It does not say that Jethro was a priest of *On*, but of Midian.' R. Simeon replied: 'It is all one; at first the father-in-law of Joseph was called a "priest of On", and then "the father-in-law of Moses" was called a "priest of Midian", and both have the same symbolism, for both Moses and Joseph were in that grade symbolized by the two *Vau*'s that are one.' Then R. Abba put his hands on his head, wept again, and said: 'The light of the Torah now reaches the highest throne in heaven. But who will light the lamp of the Torah when the Master shall have passed away? Woe to the world which will be orphaned without thee. However, the words of the Master will shine in the world until King Messiah appears, when " the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. XI, 9).'

NOW JETHRO HEARD OF ALL THAT GOD (*Elohim*) HAD DONE FOR MOSES AND FOR ISRAEL, HIS PEOPLE, AND

THAT THE LORD (*YHVH*) HAD BROUGHT ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT. Said R. Hiya: 'We note that there is a transition in this verse from the name Elohim to the name YHVH. There is an inner reason for this. The first name indicates the Shekinah who protected Israel in exile, always being present with them and with Moses; and the second name signifies the supreme emanation which brought them out from Egypt, and is symbolically known as "Jubilee". According to another interpretation, "What God had done for Moses" refers to the time when he was thrown into the Nile and when he was saved from Pharaoh's sword, and "for Israel his people" to the time when "He heard the groaning".' R. Jose here quoted the verse: "He sent redemption unto his people; he hath commanded his covenant for ever; holy and awful is his name" (Ps. CXI, 9). He pointed out that this and the following verse ("The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do his commandments; his praise endureth for ever") each consists of three parts, the first letters of which are in alphabetical order, whilst the rest of the Psalm has but two such parts in each verse. And his explanation was that the last two verses between them complete the alphabet on six sides. The first corresponds to the three redemptions of Israel, apart from the Egyptian (i.e. Babylonian, Syrian, and the future one); the second to the three divisions of Scripture: Torah, Prophets and Sacred Writings. "He sent redemption unto His people", namely, when He redeemed Israel from the Egyptian exile; "He hath commanded His covenant for ever", that is, when Jethro came and the Holy One received him into His Covenant and brought him near to Himself that he might worship Him. Since then all proselytes have been brought to rest under the wings of the Shekinah, and hereby "holy and awful is His Name", for the Holy Name is hallowed when the "other side" is subdued and broken, as in the case of Jethro.'

NOW JETHRO . . . HEARD. Was Jethro the only one who heard of all that God had done? Does it not say, "Peoples heard, they were afraid" (Ex. XV, 14)? Indeed, the whole

world did hear, yet Jethro alone [68b] renounced idolatry and accepted the Holy One to worship Him.

Said R. Abba: 'We have frequently affirmed that whatever the Holy One has made, whether it be above or below, has a purpose: He is truth and His work is truth, and therefore no phenomenon in the world is to be spurned as of no account, since everything is formed according to a divine pattern, and therefore is of some necessity. Once, for example, R. Eleazar was walking along accompanied by R. Hezekiah, when they came across a snake. R. Hezekiah was about to kill it, but R. Eleazar said: 'Nay, leave it alone, do not kill it!' Said R. Hezekiah to him: 'But is it not a noxious creature which kills people?' To which R. Eleazar replied: 'It is written: "Doth the serpent bite without enchantment? (lit. whispering)" (Eccl. x, 11). The serpent does not bite unless it be whispered to from above and commanded to kill some one, so as to prevent that person from committing some evil; thus the very poison is used by the Holy One in order to perform some miracle. It is, in truth, all in His hands; it is all according to His plan, and if it had no purpose He would not have created it. And if it is wrong to despise anything in this world, how much more sinful must it be to think lightly of any word or act of the Holy One, blessed be He. It is written: "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1, 31). The "living God" (*Elohim Hayyim*) purposed to give us light and to care for us in His Providence; and in His creation all are united, above and below, the "Right Side" and the "Left Side", the angel of life and the angel of death: all are part of His plan, and it is "very good"; it is all part of the same mystic doctrine, apprehended by those who contemplate the mystery of wisdom.

'It was Jethro who gave Moses sound advice concerning the administration of justice. And in this is contained an allusion to his confessing the Holy One, namely, in his awareness that "judgement is God's" (Deut. 1, 17), and belongs not to the "other side", and that law and right were given to Israel and not to any of the heathen nations, as it is written: "He showeth his words unto Jacob, his statutes and

his judgements unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgements, they have not known them" (Ps. CXLVII, 19, 20). So one must beware of despising anyone, since the words of an ordinary person may be of great consequence, [69a] as it says of Moses that he "hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said" (Ex. XVIII, 24).'

R. Eleazar continued: 'It is written, "Therefore I shall praise thee, O Lord, among the nations, and sing praises unto thy name" (Ps. XVIII, 50). David said this under the prompting of the Holy Spirit, when he saw that the glory of the Holy One is not exalted and honoured in the world as it should be, unless other nations also contribute. It is true that the Holy One is glorified for Israel's sake alone; but while Israel are the foundation of the divine light from out of which issues forth light for the whole world, yet when heathen nations come to accept the glory of the Holy One and to worship Him, then the foundation of the light is strengthened, and all its rays are unified, and then the Holy One reigns above and below. This is exactly what happened when Jethro, the high priest of paganism, was converted to the worship of the true God of Israel: the whole world, hearing of the mighty works of the Holy One, and seeing that the great sage, Jethro, had been drawn to worship the God of Israel, gave up their idols, realizing their impotence, and in this way the glory of the Holy Name of God was exalted on all sides. For this reason the narrative concerning Jethro has been preserved in the Torah, with Jethro's name at the head.

'Pharaoh had as his counsellors three sages: Jethro, Balaam, and Job. Jethro, as already set forth, was the minister of worship, and there was no celestial Chieftain or star of which he did not know the appropriate cult. Balaam was an arch-sorcerer, in word and act. Job displayed pre-eminently the sense of religious awe and fear; for in the sphere of supramundane relationships, whether in the region of holiness or of unholiness ("the other side"), man cannot draw down the spirit from above and unite himself with it without a sense of fear and awe, the concentration of heart

and mind, and self-effacement. Without this fear the worshipper, even if he be an idolater, cannot properly link his will to the power above; he will only be able to attain to some small sparks of that power and even these require concentration of will and a sense of fear. Jethro's religious activity had to be continuous, and independent of the needs of the worshippers; for, in order that he might be able to use the power when he needed to do so, he had always to be connected with it. Balaam clung to his mediums of sorcery, as we have stated, and Job, because of that overpowering sense of awe which was in him, when he saw the mighty works of the God of Israel in Egypt, turned to worship Him with the same amount of fear and awe. But Jethro was not converted until later. Only when the Israelites had actually left Egypt, when he realized that all the bonds by which the Egyptian magicians had attempted to retain Israel in their power were futile, and when he saw that the Egyptians themselves had all perished in the Red Sea, only then did he turn to worship the Holy One, blessed be He. Balaam, again, was not converted at all, for the impurity of the "other side" clung to him. Yet even he saw something of the Divine and the Holy, although from a distance, through the mist of his impurity and attachment to the "other side". For in the "other side" there is an admixture or outer ring of light which surrounds the darkness, as it is written: "A whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud . . . *and a brightness was about it*" (Ezek. I, 4). And he saw this brightness from a distance, but, as it were, through a partition; therefore, although he prophesied, he knew not what he prophesied: he looked at the light with a "closed eye" (Num. XXIV, 4), for there is no sphere of the "other side" that entirely lacks [69*b*] some streak of light from the side of holiness, as even in a field of straw there are some grains of wheat, save only certain minor powers of special shamelessness and uncleanness. And it is this little spot of light which Balaam saw. Blessed is Moses who moved in all the supernal holy regions, and who beheld that which it is not given to any other human being to behold. Moreover, as Balaam saw from a distance a small light from within the "other side", as it were through a partition, so Moses saw

through the great light, as through a wall, a streak of darkness at its edge; but even he did not see it always, just as Balaam did not always see the streak of light. Happy was the lot of the faithful prophet Moses, for what is it that we read concerning him? "And an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush" (Ex. III, 2). The bush was indeed in that region of holiness and clave to it, for all things cleave to one another, the pure and the impure, there is no purity except through impurity; a mystery which is expressed in the words: "a clean thing out of an unclean" (Job XIV, 4). The brain is contained in a shell, a shell which will not be broken until that time when the dead shall rise again. Then will the shell be broken and the light shine out into the world from the brain, without any covering on it. Blessed are the righteous in this world and in the world to come.'

AND JETHRO TOOK ZIPPORAH AND HER TWO SONS. Why are they called "her two sons" and not "sons of Moses"? R. Hiya said because she had brought them up. R. Eleazar, however, explained it differently, saying that because Moses had united himself with a supernal sphere of holiness (the Shekinah), it would have been irreverent to call them "his sons", although they were in fact his sons, and later, when he had separated himself for the time being from the Shekinah, and went out to meet his father-in-law, we read: "And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with *his* sons" (v. 5). Said R. Simeon: 'Eleazar, Eleazar! I see that the beginning of thy interpretation is quite right, but not the end. Certainly, because of the honour of the Shekinah, who was united with him at the time, it is written, "her sons", but when it says afterwards "his sons" it refers not to Moses but to Jethro, who begat sons after Moses had come to him, like Laban, who had no sons before Jacob came and dwelt in his house. For Moses' sake, and through his merit, did Jethro beget sons, whom he then brought with him to Moses, so that they might all enter together under the wings of the Shekinah. Therefore it says also in the following verse (6): "I, thy father-in-law, Jethro, am come unto thee, and thy

wife, and her two sons with her." And that Jethro did have sons is definitely stated: "And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law . . ." (Judges I, 16), and he left his sons to be with Moses.'

Then R. Simeon went on to expound in connection with this theme the words of the prophet Isaiah (II, 3): "And many people shall go, and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob." 'A time will come', he said, 'when the heathen nations will wear their feet out to go and be brought under the wings of the Shekinah. "Let us go up", they will say—since all paganism is a *descent*, but cleaving to the Holy One is an *ascent*—" to the mountain of the Lord", i.e. the God of Abraham, who said: "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen" (Gen. XXII, 14); for as the mountain is free to all to ascend, so is this holy place open to receive all comers. The verse continues: "to the house of the God of Jacob", because Jacob called the same place "a house of God" (*Ibid.* XXVIII, 17). Or, rather, it is called "mount" and is also called "house", although it is the same sphere of the Divine, [70a] since it is a "mount" for the nations of the world, who have to ascend it if they desire to enter under the wings of the Shekinah, but a "house" to Israel, to whom the Shekinah stands in the relationship of a wife to a husband, united in love and joy, hovering over Israel like a mother over her children. Of Jethro we read: "And Jethro . . . came with his sons . . . to Moses into the desert." When it says "to Moses", why add "to the desert"? Because herein lay the whole significance of his coming; the "desert" symbolized the "mountain of the Lord", the place for the reception of proselytes; in other words, Jethro came to Moses with the intention of becoming a proselyte and entering under the wings of the Shekinah. Everyone who comes to this region called "Mountain" becomes a participant in this mystery, and is called "a proselyte of righteousness". However, although he is joined to this holy supernal sphere, yet is he called "*Ger*" (proselyte, lit. sojourner), a person living out of his own country, because he has left his own people and kin and taken up his abode in a new place.

MOREOVER, THOU SHALT LOOK ABOUT AND CHOOSE OUT OF ALL THE PEOPLE, ABLE MEN. R. Isaac and R. Jose were one day studying the Torah in Tiberias. R. Simeon passed by and asked them what they were engaged upon. They answered him: 'The words which we have learned from thee, Master,' 'Which?' said he. They replied: 'It arises out of the verse: "This is the book of the generations of man; in the day when God created man, in the likeness of God made he him" (Gen. V, 1). We were taught,' they said, 'that this verse indicates that the Holy One showed to the first man all the future generations of mankind: all the leaders, all the sages of each period. We were further taught concerning the mystery contained in the words "this is the book" that there are two books, an upper and a lower book. The lower book is the "book of remembrance", and the upper one is called " this". And in order to show that the two are not separated, but form one, it is written "this is the book". There are two grades, male and female. For all the souls and spirits that enter human beings are alluded to in the words "generations of man (Adam)", for they all issue from the "Righteous One", and this is the "watering of the river that went out of Eden to water the garden" (Gen. II, 10). There is also another, a lower "Adam", alluded to in the words, "on the day that God created man (Adam)", in the same verse. [70b] In regard to the upper Adam, the union of male and female is at first only distantly alluded to in the words "this is the book", but after they produced offspring they are called openly "Adam". Then it is said that God made man in the "likeness" of God. By the word "likeness" we are to understand a kind of mirror in which images appear momentarily and then pass away. According to another explanation, the word "likeness" refers to the union of male and female organs: and so the Master affirmed. Furthermore: "This is the book of the generations of Man", viz. the book which reveals the inner meaning of the features of man, so as to teach the knowledge of human nature. The character of man is revealed in the hair, the forehead, the eyes, the lips, the features of the face, the lines of the hands, and even the ears. By these seven can the different types of men be recognized.

'*The Hair*. A man with coarse, upstanding, wavy hair, is of a truculent disposition. His heart is as stiff as a die. His works are not upright. Have no fellowship with him. A man with very smooth, sleek and heavy-hanging hair, is a good companion, and one benefits from association with him. When left to himself he is not quite reliable. He cannot keep secrets [71*a*] unless they are of great importance. His actions are sometimes good and sometimes the reverse.

'A man whose hair lies flat, yet is not sleek, is fearless and insolent. He has a strong desire to do good, for he perceives the beauty of goodness, but alas! his good intentions are never realized. In his old age he becomes God-fearing and pious. Great secrets are not to be entrusted to him, but he is safe enough with small ones. He can make much out of little and his words are listened to with respect. He is under the esoteric sign of the letter *Zain*, according to the scheme which our Master has taught us.

'A man whose hair is black and extremely glossy will succeed in all his doings, particularly in secular matters such as commerce, for instance. He is generous. But he prospers only as an individual; anyone associating himself with him will also have success, but not for long. He is also under the letter *Zain*.

'One whose hair is black but not glossy is not always successful in mundane affairs. It is good to associate oneself with him for a while in business matters. Should he be a student of the Torah he will succeed in his studies, and others who will join him will likewise succeed. He is a man who can keep a secret, but not for long. He is of a despondent nature, but will prevail against his enemies. He is under the sign of the letter *Yod* when it is not included in the letter *Zain*, but is numbered independently among the small letters.

'A man who is bald is successful in business, but is not straightforward. There is always a scarcity of food in his house. He is hypocritical; that is, when his baldness begins in youth. If he becomes bald in his old age he changes and becomes the opposite of what he was before, for good or for ill. This, however, only refers to the baldness which occurs

on the forehead, at the spot where the phylactery is put on. Otherwise, it is not so. He is not [71*b*] deceitful, but is given to backbiting and insinuation. He is occasionally sin-fearing. He is under the sign of the letter *Zain* when it includes the letter *Yod*. So much for the mysteries revealed by the different kinds of hair, mysteries revealed and entrusted only to those well versed in holy lore, those who comprehend the ways and mysteries of the Torah, by which they may find out the hidden propensities of men.

'*The forehead*. The secret of the forehead belongs under the sign of the letter *Nun*, which forms the completion of the letter *Zain;* sometimes this is included in the symbolism of *Zain* and sometimes it stands separately.

'A forehead which rises sharply upward from the nose, being straight and flat without any outward curve or rounding, indicates that its owner is somewhat thoughtless. Such a man will consider himself wise, though in reality he knows little. His temper will be quick, and his tongue like a serpent's. If his forehead has large uneven furrows when he speaks, but other lines on his forehead lie even, he is not a person to associate with save for a brief period. Whatever he plans or does is only for his own advantage; he cares for no one but himself. He is incapable of keeping any secret entrusted to him, and the saying, "A tale-bearer revealeth secrets" (Prov. XI, 13) is true of him; indeed, he cares not what he says. This type of person belongs to the mystery of the letter *Nun* when it is contained in the letter *Zain*. Such a one may be thought of as anything but reliable.

'A fine and rounded forehead indicates a man of great penetration, but whose judgement is sometimes clouded. He loves cheerfulness, and is kindhearted to all. He has high intellectual interests. Should he study the Torah he will become very proficient. When he speaks three large wrinkles appear on his forehead and three smaller ones above each eye. If when he is angry he weeps, he is better than he appears to be. In word and deed he is forthright and cares nothing for anyone. He will study the Torah with profit. Anyone [72*a*] who allies himself with him will derive benefit from the association and will profit even in secular matters.

He is not consistently pious. In legal affairs he will always be unlucky, and should therefore avoid such embroilments as far as possible. This type stands in the symbolism of the letter *Nun* alone when it is not included in the *Zain*. It is for this reason that he must shun legal matters, since he does not belong to the region of justice, but to that of love and mercy.

'A person whose forehead is large and yet unrounded—the kind of man who always bends his head, whether he stand or move—this type can be divided into two classes, both witless. The madness of the one is evident, apparent to all; such a person is an acknowledged idiot. On his forehead are four large wrinkles, which usually appear when he speaks. Sometimes, however, the skin of his forehead is stretched and the wrinkles are not evident, but other larger ones appear close to his eyes. He laughs for no reason, and at nothing. His mouth is large and loose. Such a man is of no worth or use. The other kind of madness included in this type is less apparent, and is unnoticeable in common intercourse. Such a man may pursue study with success, even the study of the Torah, though he will not take it up for its own sake, but only to make a show. He makes a great parade of his religion, to give the impression that he is deeply pious, but in reality he has no thought of God, but only of man. The one object of all his thoughts and behaviour is to draw attention to himself. This type, with its two distinct variants, also stands under the sign of the *Nun* when it is contained in the *Zain*.

'A large rounded forehead indicates one who is open-minded and generally gifted. He can acquire any kind of knowledge, even without a teacher. His undertakings are uniformly successful, except when they are concerned with money matters, in which he sometimes comes to grief. He can infer great things from small; hence he is rightly called discerning. He is detached from the things of this world, and even when he knows that he will suffer [72*b*] by not considering earthly matters he pays them no heed. He is tenderhearted. His forehead is deeply furrowed by two wrinkles, set high upon his brow, one over each eye. His forehead also has three long lines, and between his eyes is the double

vertical furrow which signifies deep thought. He is always concerned with realities and not with appearances, because he does not care what men say about him. He is never afraid for long. He is very conciliatory. To outsiders his acts appear sometimes childish and sometimes wise. This type also stands in the sign of the *Nun* when it is separated and not included in the *Zain*. So much for the mystery connected with the study of the forehead.

'*The eyes*. The eyes are connected with the symbolism of the letter *Samech*. There are varieties of colour and of form. In the substances which go to compose the visible discernible eye are contained four colours. There is the white of the ball, which is common to all sorts of eyes. Enclosed within this white is the darker hue of the iris—thus white and dark are united. Included in this dark there is yet another shade, a bluish tinge; and the inmost circle of colour is black, this being the pupil.

'A man whose eyes are evenly set is straightforward and free from guile. A person with such eyes is always merry and full of jokes. He has good intentions, but seldom carries them out because of his fickleness. His mind is chiefly occupied with worldly things, but he has the capacity for spiritual matters if he should turn his thoughts towards them; therefore he should be encouraged in this direction. His eyebrows are long, slanting downward. In the midst of these several colours of the eye are sundry fine red veins, which are called the "small letters" of the eyes, because, when the colours shine, [73*a*] their light causes the letters to be revealed in those veins to the initiated, these veins being formed in the shape of the letter *Samech* when it contains the letter *Hé*.

'A man who has blue eyes set in white will be of a kindly disposition, but at the same time selfish. If the black is not noticeable in his eyes he will have strong desires, but not for evil, though he will not resist evil when it approaches. He can be trusted when he speaks of matters within his own knowledge, but not otherwise. He can keep a secret so long as it is a secret, but once it has leaked out he tells everything, since he does nothing perfectly. The colours of such an eye

and the type to which its possessor conforms are contained in the mystery of the letter *Hé* when contained in the letters *Zain* and *Samech*.

'He whose eyes are of a yellowish-blue colour has madness in his veins; he therefore suffers from megalomania and is grandiloquent in his manner and speech. In discussion he is easily defeated. He is not worthy to be instructed in the mystical meanings of the Torah, as he does not accept them meekly but becomes puffed up with his knowledge. This type belongs to the mystery of the letter *Hé*, which is included in the letter *Zain* only, being far removed from the letter *Samech* on account of his conceit. When such a man speaks, many wrinkles appear on his forehead.

'One whose eyes are pale with a certain admixture of a greenish hue is of an irascible disposition, but is also often kind-hearted enough. When angered, however, he becomes cruel. He cannot be entrusted with a secret. He belongs to the sign of the letter *Hé* when it is included in the letter *Samech*.

'The man whose eyes are white and blue, with only a spot of black in them, can be trusted with secrets and makes good use of them. If he makes a good beginning in anything [73*b*] he goes on prospering. His enemies cannot prevail against him, they can do him no evil, and eventually they are entirely subdued by him. He is under the sign of the letter *Kaph* when it is included in the letter *Samech*.

'So much for the mysteries concerning the eyes, which are revealed unto the wise.

'*The lineaments of the countenance*. For the masters of the inner wisdom the features of the face are not those which appear outwardly, but those within formed by internal forces; for the features of the face are moulded by the impress of the inner face which is concealed in the spirit residing within. This spirit produces outward traits which are recognizable to the wise, the true features being discernible from the spirit. Man has a spirit on which the letters of the alphabet are in a way designed. All these letters are enclosed in that spirit, and for a time the designs of those letters enter into the face; and as they enter, the face appears with the design of these

letters upon it. But this semblance lasts for a short time only, save upon the faces of adepts in wisdom, on whom it is always visible.

'There is a place which is called "the world to come", from whence issues the mystery of the Torah with its alphabet of twenty-two letters, which is the essence of all things. Now that "river which goes out of Eden" carries all this along with it, so that when the spirits and the souls emerge therefrom they are all stamped with the imprint of those letters; the which, when the spirit of a man be thus stamped by it, makes also a certain impression on the face.' Said R. Simeon to them: 'If so, the likeness of the Mother is not impressed upon the form of that spirit.'

They replied: 'This, Master, is the teaching which we have heard from thine own lips: The design of the letters proceeds from the side which is above, and the image of the Mother is impressed upon the spirit, while below the form of the letter is hidden in the spirit. The design of the Mother which is outwardly discernible follows the four prototypes—Man, Lion, Bull, and Eagle, in the Supernal Chariot, and the spirit projects the image of them all for a time, because whatsoever belongs to the domain of [74*a*] the spirit thrusts itself forward and is both visible and invisible. All these forms are designed in the shape of the letters, and although they are hidden they are discerned for a short space by those who have eyes to see, by the wise who can comprehend the mystery of wisdom, to contemplate therein. Now, these are the four designs, their manifestations and significance:

'1. When a man walks in the way of truth, those who know the mysteries of the inner wisdom can recognize him, because the inner spirit is duly prepared in him, and projects the full design of itself from within to without, from invisible to visible. And that design it is which becomes the outer form of a man. That is the design which is more perfect than any other. This design is the one which is made visible for a little unto the eyes of Wisdom and the children thereof. When one looks on the face of such a man one is moved to love him. On it is traced the design of four letters by means of a fine vein which is projected from the right side, and

another vein, itself containing two more, which is projected from the left. These four signs severally form the four letters which make up the word *edut* (testimony). The sign of the first letter is represented by the vein which is on the right side, and each of the other three letters by one of the other three veins. This we find expressed in the words: "A testimony (*edut*) in Joseph" (Ps. LXXXI, 6), for everyone who looked upon him loved him, and he was perfected in love. In the seed of David the colours are reversed, and this it was that misled Samuel (1 Sam. XVI, 7). Such a face contains all forms. Such a man is even-tempered, self-controlled, even when he is angered, and quickly appeased. [74*b*]

'2. When a man, not entirely bad, changes his ways and turns to the Lord, a good spirit begins to rest upon him, so that he is enabled to prevail against the evil that was in him, and for a time this new spirit thrusts itself forward into the expression of his face in the form of a *lion*. At a first casual examination his face would not inspire love, but gradually it becomes better comprehended and so better loved. When people look at him a sense of shame for his past misdeeds comes over him, for he feels that everyone knows his former evil ways, and the blood rushes to his face, and then again he turns pale. On his face are three veins, one on the right, one going up to the bridge of the nose, and a third which is joined thereto and branches downward from them. These veins form the shapes of the letters which are traced upon his face. They usually stand out prominently and quiver, but when he is penitent and gradually becomes accustomed to walking in the way of truth they subside. The mystery of these letters is contained in the word *Karib* (*Koph*, *Resh*, *Yod*, *Beth*, "near"), signifying that he had been *far* from holiness. [75*a*] Although there are also other veins in his face, these do not protrude, except when he treads the paths of crookedness and iniquity. Here again the seed of David are the reverse of other men, first appearing in the form of Man and then in that of Lion, finally separating and taking the form of the "other side".

'3. When a man deserts the ways of the Torah and follows ways of iniquity, the holy spirit, which formerly dwelt in his

inner self, removes its influence from him and another spirit takes up its abode there, with another form which impresses itself on the outer lineaments and is there manifested to the vision of the wise in the form of an *Ox*. When they gaze at the person thus possessed, they mentally behold this form, and they observe in him two red, berry-like veins on the right side of the face, and three on the left. These are the symbolic letters of his type which shape themselves thus visibly in his face: one spherical and thin, the two others, also round, above it. The eyes of such a man are sunk deep in his head. The symbolic expression of these letters is as follows: The first vein is in the form of the letter *Kaph*, and the other two severally in that of *Resh* and *Tau* (*Karet*=to be cut off). The same letters are denoted by the veins on the left side of the face. Their significance is indicated by the words: "The shew (*ha-Karath*) of their countenance doth witness against them" (Isa. III, 9). These veins swell in the face more than all the others; but when the sinner repents and turns from the way of the left side back to the right hand of mercy and righteousness, that spirit whose form is the ox is subdued, and the spirit of holiness prevails; these thin veins then protrude no more, but recede into the inner reaches of the flesh and are lost sight of, and those which are the symbol of the good spirit become evident in their stead. With the seed of David the reverse was the case: first the lion held sway, and afterwards the ox. Two dark veins were made visible in his face, one on the right side of it and one on the left, which formed the two letters, *Daleth* and *Ain;* this being quite the reverse of other men.

'4. This is the sign of a man who is perpetually in the state of making reparation for past misdeeds, making good the defects of his former life on earth. He is symbolized by the form of an eagle. His spirit is weak. No protuberant veins with a symbolic significance can be discerned in the lineaments of his countenance, since these were lost during the period of his former life. But this is the sign by which he can be recognized. His eyes do not sparkle even when he is joyful, because his spirit does not shine in the letters, and the spark of light which was in him in his former state has

been extinguished. He does not belong to the grade of those whose character can be read in their faces. To him can be applied the words: "Wherefore I praise the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive" (Eccl. IV, 2). The seed of David, however, is indicated in the words: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, to show them His covenant."

'Thus in the spirit of man, as we have shown, are inscribed letters which press through into visibility. To penetrate through these reflections to the inner symbols and to decipher those symbols aright is the privilege of the wise alone, that they may finally attain to knowledge of the spirit of which the symbols are the manifestation, through the esoteric significance of the words "This is the book" (Gen. V, 1). Through this all is revealed to them save that countenance which is to be judged by a different rule, according to the domination [75b] of the spirit or the Lord of the spirit. Happy and blessed indeed are they to whom is entrusted knowledge of all these things! So much for the mystery of the countenance.

'*The lips*. The mystery of the lips belongs to the letter *Pé* when it is included in the letter *Samech*. A man whose lips are big and thick is a tale-bearer, without shame or fear, a man of strife and mischief. He cannot keep a secret, but when he happens to be a student of the Torah he can for a time cover and keep hidden secret matters. His sign is the letter *Pé* when it is included in the letter *Resh*, but not in *Samech*. He makes a show of being pious, but is not; one should not have any dealings with him, because all his words proceed out of his mouth alone, but not from his heart.

'Thick dry lips indicate a man of quick temper and insolence, intolerant, speaking evil of his fellows, without any sense of shame. He likes to mock and jeer at others. One should avoid a man of this kind. And when his whole face becomes hairy his evil tongue witnesses clearly against him. He is totally shameless, loving strife. In worldly matters he is apt to be successful. He is of a vengeful spirit, and relentless towards his enemies. Concerning him it is said: "A wicked man hardeneth his face" (Prov. XXI, 29). He stands under the sign of the letter *Pé* alone when it is not included

in the *Samech*, though it may sometimes be included in the letter *Resh*.

'*The ears*. Excessively large ears are a sign of stupidity in the heart and madness in the mind. Small shapely ears denote wisdom and sensibility, and their owner likes to try everything. His type is under the sign of the letter *Yod* when it is included in all the other letters.

'So much for the mysteries of the human physiognomy. Now we turn to other mysteries contained in the letters, but not set forth upon the countenance, being concerned with the apprehension of times and seasons: mysteries of which we are unworthy.'

R. Simeon said: 'Ye are worthy in this world and ye are worthy in the world to come. Blessed are my eyes that will be worthy to see it all when I enter the world to come. For my soul calls to the Ancient of Days: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over" (Ps. XXIII, 5). And the Holy One, blessed be He, calls concerning us: "Open ye the gates, that the righteous people which keepeth truth may enter in" (Isa. XXVI, 2).'

Then they began to discourse on the verse: "And they (the *Hayoth*) had the hands of a man, under their wings, on their four sides" (Ezek. I, 8). 'This', said they, 'has been explained by the Fellowship as referring to the hands stretched out to receive penitents who return to God. But the expression "the hands of a man" also signifies all those forms and supernal mysteries which the Holy One has stamped upon man and ordered in his fingers outwardly and inwardly and in the "palm" (*Kaph*). When the Holy One created man He set in him all the images of the supernal mysteries of the world above, and all the images of the lower mysteries of the world below, and all are designed in man, who stands in the image of God, because he is called "the creation of the palm", and this is the mystery of the letter *Kaph*. Supernal mysteries and symbols are contained in this; the Ten Words, five belonging to the right side and five to the left, are all united in it as one mystery. Therefore it says: "I will also smite my one palm (*kaph*) upon the other" (Ezek. XXI, 17), meaning

that the Lord will cause the two hands to be divided, so that blessing will depart from the world and the glory of Israel shall be given over to the nations. But when they are united as one, it is as it says: "One vessel (*kaph*, lit. palm) of ten shekels of gold" (Num. VII, 14). When they were united "God created Man in His own image." Man was in the Divine mind, in the inner mystery. God created him, male and female in one, "in the image of God", symbolized by the palm. For when man was created, what is it that is written concerning him? "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews" (Job X, 11). [76a]

'What, then, is man? Does he consist solely of skin, flesh, bones and sinews? Nay, the essence of man is his soul; the skin, flesh, bones and sinews are but an outward covering, the mere garments, but they are not the man. When man departs (from this world) he divests himself of all these garments. The skin with which he covers himself, and all these bones and sinews, all have a symbolism in the mystery of the Supernal Wisdom, corresponding to that which is above. The symbolism of the skin is as the Master has taught us in connection with the words: "Who stretchest out the heaven like a curtain" (Ps. CIV, 2); and again: "Rams' skins, dyed red, and badgers' skins" (Ex. XXV, 5, in connection with the tabernacle). These skins are a garment which protects a garment, viz. the extension of the heavens, which is the outer garment (of the Divine). The curtains (of the Tabernacle) are the inner garments; corresponding to the skin upon the flesh. The bones and the sinews symbolize the Chariots and the celestial Hosts, which are inward. All these are garments upon that which is inward; which also is the mystery of the Supernal Man, who is the innermost. The same is found here below. Man is something inward, and his garments correspond to that which is above. The bones and sinews, as we have said, correspond to the Chariots and Hosts. The flesh is a covering to those hosts and chariots, and manifests itself outwardly, and is symbolically connected with the "other side" (the purely sensuous element). The skin, covering all, corresponds to the firmaments which

cover all things. And all these are merely garments to clothe himself withal, for within is the essential man. Everything below corresponds to that which is above. This is the significance of the words: "And God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him." Esoterically, the man below corresponds entirely to the Man above. Just as in the firmament, which covers the whole universe, we behold different shapes formed by the conjunction of stars and planets to make us aware of hidden things and deep mysteries; so upon the skin which covers our body and which is, as it were, the body's firmament, covering all, there are shapes and designs—the stars and planets of the body's firmament, the skin through which the wise of heart may behold the hidden things and the deep mysteries indicated by these shapes and expressed in the human form. Concerning this it is written: "The viewers of the heavens, the star-gazers" (Is. XLVII, 13). But all this can only be discerned, in the case of the stars, in a clear sky, and, in man, when the face shines and is not clouded with anger, for then another rule applies. But when the faces of men are serene, and they are in their normal state, their shapes and lineaments reveal to the wise the inner thoughts and propensities of the mind. So by the lines of the hands and of the fingers it is possible to discern hidden facts of a man's personality. They are the shining stars which reveal the varieties of human types and their relationships to the upper treasures."[1] [78a]

MOREOVER THOU SHALT PROVIDE (lit. behold) OUT OF ALL THE PEOPLE, ETC. Said R. Simeon: 'It does not say "thou shalt choose", but "thou shalt behold", namely, by means of the gift of inner sight of those characteristics which we have mentioned. All are indicated in this verse: "thou shalt look" refers to the hair; "of all the people" to the forehead; "for able men" to the face; "God-fearing" to the eyes; "men of truth" to the lips; and "hating covetousness" to the hands. All these are the signs by which to recognize men: signs, that is, to those on whom the spirit of wisdom rests. And yet Moses had no need of these signs,

[1] Here follows in the original a discourse on palmistry.

for we read: "And Moses chose able men out of all Israel" (v. 25); he chose them by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for we read: "When they have a matter, *he* cometh unto me" (v. 16); this "he" in the singular instead of "they" in the plural indicates that it refers to the Holy Spirit. So there was no necessity for him to use the gift of inner sight in order to find out who were the right persons: he knew at once whom to choose through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Similarly Solomon, in all the legal cases brought before him, could give his decisions without the aid of any witnesses, because the Holy Spirit was present at his throne, and everyone coming near to it was overcome with fear and trembling. There was an invisible figure hidden in the throne, and when any one uttered a false plea it made a sound by which Solomon knew at once that the person was not telling the truth. But the Messiah will discern persons by their odour, for of him it says: "His scent will be in the fear of the Lord, and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears" (Isa. xi, 3). These three judged without witnesses and without warning; all others must judge according to the law, and must decide by the word of witnesses. The wise who are adepts in physiognomical lore must warn men and provide healing for their souls. Blessed are they in this world, and blessed in the world to come.'

IN THE THIRD MONTH, WHEN THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WERE GONE FORTH OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT. . . . The third month is the one in which the celestial chief Uriel has sway. He has three hundred and sixty-five myriads of camps with him, corresponding to all the days of the year. All have three hundred and sixty-five keys of light issuing from the inner supernal sphere called "Hashmal" (v. Ezek. i, 4), which is hidden and veiled, in which the mysteries of the holy celestial letters of the Holy Name [78b] are suspended. This "*hashmal*" receives the most supernal and recondite lights, and passes them on, so that all the camps receive those keys of the light[1] which issues

[1] *Tifereth.*

forth from that sphere. And that light is contained in two lights, which yet are one. The first light[1] is white, too bright for the eye to behold. It is the light which is hidden away for the righteous in the world to come, as it is written: "Light is sown for the righteous" (Ps. xcvii, ii). The second light[2] is one which gleams and sparkles redly. The two are united and become one. Uriel, the head of the angels, and all those hosts, partake of this light. As it is contained in two lights, it is called the "Twins". Therefore, in that month in which the Torah was given (Sivan), the constellation of the "Twins" rules, and from them issue lights of various grades below to illumine the world. Among all the other signs of the Zodiac there is not one possessing mouth or tongue, but this one has both, and the two are one. Therefore it is written in regard to the Torah: "And thou shalt meditate therein day and night" (Jos. i, 8), "day" corresponding to the tongue, and "night" corresponding to the mouth. And both these are *one*. Therefore the word *teomim* (twins), in connection with Jacob and Esau (Gen. xxv, 24), is written in a defective form, in order to indicate that Jacob alone is under the sign of this constellation. For Jacob had two months, Nisan and Iyar, as his, and is therefore within the symbolism of the "twins"; while Esau's months are Tamuz and Ab, and only nine days in Ab, so it can be seen that he is not included in the Twins. He separated himself and turned towards impurity, in chaos and desolation. And because Jacob is in the sign of the Twins the Torah was given to his children in the months of the Twins, being itself "twin", viz. written and oral; it was given in the third month (Sivan), symbolizing the treble Torah (Law, Prophets, Writings).

R. Hiya said: 'At the time when the Israelites approached Mount Sinai, the Holy One gathered their families to Him and examined them as to their lineage, and He found them all of a holy seed, of genuine birth. So he said to Moses: "Now do I wish to give the Torah unto Israel. Draw them to Me by telling them of My love to their fathers and to themselves, and also concerning all the signs and wonders that I have manifested unto them. And thou shalt be My messenger."'

[1] *Hesed.* [2] *Geburah.*

AND MOSES WENT UP UNTO GOD, AND THE LORD CALLED UNTO HIM OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN. He went to the region where the wings of the Shekinah are outspread, concerning which it is said: "He bowed the heavens and came down" (Ps. XVIII, 10). Said R. Judah: 'As long as the tracings of the Supernal King[1] adhere to their proper places all worlds are impregnated with joy and all creation is upright and stable. Concerning this it is written: "And all the people among whom thou art shall see the work of the Lord that it will be terrible" (Ex. XXXIV, 10).' What is the meaning of "terrible"? Said R. Eleazar: 'It signifies the highest perfection of all, as in the expression: "A great, mighty, terrible God" (Deut. X, 17). [79a] We have a *boraitha* to the same effect.' R. Jose once said: 'One day I stood before R. Judah the ancient. I asked him to explain to me the meaning of the words: "And he (Jacob) was afraid, and said, How terrible is this place!" What did he see there to call it terrible? His answer was: "Jacob saw manifested in that region the consummation of the holy faith, which corresponded to the reality above. And any place where such a consummation is revealed is called 'terrible'." I then asked him: "If that is so, why then does the Targum translate the word '*nora*' (terrible) with 'fear' (*d'ḥilu*), and not with 'complete' (*sh'lim*)?" His answer was that there is no true fear and awe except in a place where there is completeness, as it is written "O fear the Lord, ye his saints, for there is no deficiency (*maḥsor*) to them that fear him" (Ps. XXXIV, 10), and in the sphere where there is no deficiency, there is completeness.'

A *boraitha* also tells us that R. Jose once expounded the verse: *Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name?* (Prov. XXX, 4). 'It is Moses who ascended up to heaven, as it says: "And Moses went up unto God." It is Aaron who gathered the wind in his fists, as it says: "His fist full of sweet incense" (Lev. XVI, 12). It is Elijah who "hath bound the waters in a garment", for he said: "There shall not be dew nor rain

[1] The emanations of the Godhead.

these years, but according to my word" (1 Kings XVII, 1). And it is Abraham who "hath established all the ends of the earth", for it says concerning him: "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created (*behibar'am*)" (Gen. II, 4), the last word having the same letters as *Abraham*.' This was R. Jose's first interpretation. He then gave a different one, saying: ' "Who hath ascended up into heaven?" The Holy One, of whom it says: "God hath ascended with a shout" (Ps. XLVII, 6). "Who hath gathered the wind in his fists?" The Holy One, "in whose hand is the soul of every living thing" (Job XII, 10). "Who hath bound the waters in a garment?" The Holy One, who "bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds" (*Ibid.* XXVI,8). "Who hath established all the ends of the earth?" The Holy One, of whom it says: "in the day when the Lord God made heaven and earth" (Gen. II, 4).' Finally, he affirmed that the words indicate the four knots (elements) of the universe: fire, air, water, earth. Said R. Jesse: 'It is evident that R. Jose's various applications of this verse are incompatible one with the other!' But when these interpretations came to the ears of R. Simeon, he put his hands on R. Jose's head and blessed him, saying: 'That which thou hast said is quite right. It is perfectly true, but whence hast thou these interpretations?' 'From my father, who heard it from R. Hamnuna the ancient,' replied R. Jose.

One day R. Simeon sat at the gate of Sepphoris, when R. Jesse said to him: 'R. Jose applied the verse, "Who hath ascended, etc.", first to Moses, then to the Holy One, and finally to the four elements, and I saw that thou, Master, didst bless him!' Said R. Simeon: 'What he said was perfectly true. All the applications signify one and the same thing, since they all have their root and fulfilment in the Holy One, and they are all practically equivalent.' R. Jesse was deeply impressed by these words and said: 'Now I see that this is indeed so. And I have also heard it on another occasion from the mouth of the Master. But what is the meaning of the words, "And what is his son's name?" ' R. Simeon replied: 'The inner meaning of this I myself have taught my son, R. Eleazar.' 'I pray thee, tell it to me,

for I did ask thee concerning it in a dream, but when I awoke I had forgotten thine answer.' 'And now, when I tell thee, wilt thou remember it?' 'I surely will,' replied R. Jesse, 'I always remember what my Master tells me.' Said R. Simeon: 'The words must be understood in the light of the expression, "My first-born son Israel" (Ex. IV, 22), and "Israel, in whom I am glorified" (Isa. XLIX, 3). "Israel" here refers to the supernal world, and it is this which is called "son". Whereupon R. Jesse replied: 'With all due respect to the Master, this is a secret which I already know.' But yet again he forgot it. He was much perturbed. But when he went into his house and lay down to sleep, he saw in his dream an haggadic book, wherein it was written: "Wisdom (*Hokmah*) and glory (*Tifereth*) in His sanctuary." When he awoke, he straightway went to R. Simeon, kissed his hand, and said: 'This night I saw in my dream an [79b] haggadic book wherein were written the words: "Wisdom and glory in His sanctuary", "Wisdom" above, "Glory" below, and "in His sanctuary" at the side. This I saw in a dream, and I found it on my lips when I awoke.' Said R. Simeon to him: 'Until this time thou wast too young to join the company of the "reapers of the field", but now everything has been shown unto thee! Thus the meaning is: Wisdom (*Hokmah*) is His Name and Glory (*Tifereth*) the name of His son.'

AND MOSES WENT UP UNTO GOD. Blessed indeed was Moses to have been worthy of this honour, to which the Torah herself testifies. Said R. Judah: 'See what a difference there is between Moses and other men: "Going up" in regard to ordinary men means "getting rich", "getting on", in honours, in office, in rank, etc. But Moses "went up unto God". Truly, he was blessed.' R. Jose remarked that this is one of the passages from which the members of the Fellowship derive the lesson that "he who comes to be purified is assisted from above": because Moses "went up unto God", therefore "the Lord called unto him out of the mountain".

AND THE LORD CALLED UNTO HIM OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN, SAYING, THUS SHALT THOU SAY TO THE HOUSE

OF JACOB, AND TELL THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. R. Isaac referred in this connection to the verse: "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts" (Ps. LXV, 5). 'Blessed is the man', he said, 'whom the Holy One befriends and brings near to him to dwell in the holy Palace! He who is united with Him in worship has on him a sign inscribed from above to make it known that he is one who has been chosen by the Holy King to dwell in His courts. A man who has upon him such a sign can pass through all the supernal gates without let or hindrance.' R. Judah said: 'Blessed was Moses, concerning whom that verse was written! Of him we read: "And Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was" (Ex. XX, 21); and also, "Moses alone came nigh to the Lord, but they did not" (*Ibid.* XXIV, 2).'

THUS SHALT THOU SAY TO THE HOUSE OF JACOB: this refers to the females; AND TELL THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL: this means the males. R. Simeon connected the "thus" (*Koh*) in this verse with the "thus" in the ordinance of the priestly benediction: "Thus (*Koh*) shall ye bless" (Num. VI, 23); also with, "Thy saints bless Thee" (*yebarakukah*), which last word can be separated into two words: *yebaraku Koh*, "they bless with *Koh*" (i.e. the Sephirah Malkuth); "Saying" indicates the side of Justice (Severity), while "telling" indicates the side of Mercy, as in the verse: "And he declared (*wa-yagged*) unto you his covenant (mercy)" (Deut. IV, 13), and also in the declaration made by the Israelite on bringing the basket of firstfruits to the priest: "I proclaim (*higgadti*) this day unto the Lord thy God" (*Ibid.* XXVI, 3). Said R. Jose: 'As we have mentioned this verse, I should like to ask why it says "to the Lord thy God" instead of "the Lord our God"?' R. Simeon replied: 'This is not the only case where "thy" is used instead of "our". For instance: "the Lord *thy* God will bring thee into a good land" (*Ibid.* VIII, 7); "for the Lord *thy* God is a consuming fire" (*Ibid.* IV, 23). Moses himself, who used this expression, could not say "our" God, because, according to our dictum, "he who lives outside the Land of Israel is,

as it were, without God." So he said to the children of Israel, who were going to settle in the Holy Land and to receive the Shekinah there, "*thy* God", but he could not well say "*our* God", since he was not to enter himself into the Holy Land.' 'But', retorted R. Jose, 'why did the Israelites have to say "thy God", seeing that they were already in the land?' R. Simeon's reply was that they had to proclaim that it was due to the Supernal Grace that they were so favoured by God and blessed with so many good things. All this they said to the priest who, as such, is connected with the attribute of Grace (forgiveness of sin and mediatorship). "Say to the house of Jacob" is the form fitting for them, "and tell the children of Israel" is the more perfect form fitting for them. For Jacob and Israel represent two grades (*Malkuth* and *Tifereth*), and though they unite into one, yet the complete product is termed Israel.[80a] Hence "thou shalt tell the children of Israel", to reveal to them wisdom, and to tell them in the spirit of wisdom the grace and the truth which the Holy One, blessed be He, has shown to them.

R. Jose once told the following story: 'It chanced one day when I was out walking, accompanied by my son, R. Hiya, that we came upon a man collecting medicinal herbs. As we drew near to him I asked: "Tell us what these bundles of herbs are for?" He gave no reply, and did not even raise his head. Said I to R. Hiya, my son: "Certainly this man is either deaf or mad, or very wise." So we sat down near to him. When he had collected all the herbs and made them into bundles and covered each bundle with vine leaves, even to the last bundle of all, he turned to us, and said: "I see that ye are Jews, and it is said that the Jews are clever people. Yet, if I did not have pity on you, you would from henceforth have to shun the company of your fellows, for you become as lepers; because, as I perceive, the odour of one of these herbs has entered into your body, and it will cause you to be outcasts for three days. But now eat this garlic and you will be healed." We did as we were bid, and fell into a deep sleep. I awakened to find myself bathed in perspiration. Then the man said: "Now your God is with you indeed, for He has ordered it that you should find me and that the cure of your

bodies should be accomplished through me." As we went along he said to us: "Every person must converse with his fellows according to the sex and class to which they belong." I was struck by this remark, and said to R. Hiya, my son: "This accords with the Scriptural verse: 'Thus shalt thou *say* to the house of Jacob, and *tell* the children of Israel.' " Then the man said: "You probably wondered why I did not speak to you or pay you any apparent heed when you addressed me first. The reason is that my father was the greatest expert in herbs and their properties, and from him I learnt the powers and uses of every plant with healing properties, and I spend the whole year among them. Now with regard to the herb which ye saw me bind into bundles and cover with vine leaves. In a northern corner of my dwelling there is a place in which stands a millstone, from the hole of which a man emerges from time to time, and this man has two heads and carries a sharp sword in his hand. He strikes terror into the hearts of all who behold him, and, indeed, is the bane of our lives. On account of him I gathered this herb. Now follow me, and you shall see what virtue there is in it, and what the supreme God has revealed in the world, and how even the wise cannot surmise or fathom all His mysteries." So we followed him. On the way to his house we passed a hole in the ground in which the man deposited some of the herb. When he had done so, a serpent with an enormous head issued from the hole. The man took from his girdle a piece of cloth and bound the serpent as though it were a little lamb. We were much afraid, but the man said: "Follow me until we come to his abode"; and we followed him. Presently we reached his house, and there we saw the place of which he had spoken: in the dark, behind a wall. He took a candle and kindled a fire around the place where the millstone was set; then he said to us: "Do not be frightened at what ye see, and keep silence." As he said this he loosened the serpent's bonds and set him free, then ground some of the herb to powder and sprinkled this upon the serpent's head. Immediately the serpent descended into the opening of the millstone, and we suddenly heard a voice which made the whole place shake. We wanted to run away, being sore afraid, but the man took

hold of our hands, saying: "Fear not, come close to me." Presently the serpent reappeared and we saw that it was dripping blood. Again it entered the opening of the millstone. After a short time a man with two heads issued from the opening, with the serpent wound about his neck. Three times he entered the opening of the millstone and emerged again, saying: "Chameleon, chameleon, woe to his mother who brought him there!" Then the millstone was torn from its place and man and serpent together were hurled out at our feet, where they fell down and died. We were terrified, but the man who had brought us there said: "Thus is manifested the power of the herb which I collected in your presence! This was the reason why I did not look up at you or speak even a word. If [80b] men but knew the wisdom of all that the Holy One, blessed be He, has planted in the earth, and the power of all that is to be found in the world, they would proclaim the power of their Lord in His great wisdom. But the Holy One has purposely hidden this wisdom from men, in order that they should not turn from His way by trusting in that wisdom alone, forgetting Him."

'When I afterwards recounted the happenings of that day to R. Simeon, he said: "Surely, that was a wise man! For it is indeed as he said. Mark this! There is no grass or herb that grows in which God's wisdom is not greatly manifested and which cannot exert great influence in heaven. We may see this from the hyssop. Whenever the Holy One desires that men should purify themselves from defilement, he orders that hyssop be used as a means of purification. Now why is this? In order that the power above which is represented by that herb should be roused to exterminate the spirit of impurity, that the defiled one may be cleansed. And as to thee, I say: Blessed be the Merciful One who delivered thee." '

YE HAVE SEEN WHAT I DID UNTO THE EGYPTIANS, AND HOW I BARE YOU ON EAGLES' WINGS. What do "eagles' wings" denote? According to R. Judah, the "eagles" are a symbol of mercy, as it says: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her

wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord . . ." (Deut. XXXII, 11). As the eagle watches lovingly over its own young, but is cruel towards others, so does the Holy One manifest His loving mercy to Israel and His severe judgement to the heathen nations. R. Simeon found the same indication in the verse: "The way of an eagle in the heavens" (Prov. XXX, 19). R. Eleazar once went from Cappadocia to Lydda, accompanied by R. Jose and R. Hiya. They had risen at sunrise, and as the light appeared, R. Hiya said: 'I see before me the vision of the prophet, "As for the likeness of their (the *Hayoth*) faces, they four had the face of a man and the face of a lion, on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle" (Ezek. 1, 10). Thus the lion is on the right hand, the ox on the left; but what about the eagle?' R. Eleazar replied: 'It belongs to the sphere of the "child" (i.e. Mercy), for the eagle combines mercy and cruelty; and so God led Israel with love and dealt sternly with others, and the expression, "the way of an eagle in the heavens" is thus to be taken literally, for love (mercy) is, as it were, in the centre of heaven. Hence the lion is at the right, the ox at the left, and the eagle between, uniting them. As for "man", he comprises all, as it is written: "And upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it" (Ezek. 1, 26).'

AND IT CAME TO PASS ON THE THIRD DAY. R. Abba connected this with the following verse: "We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts; what shall we do to our sister in the day when she will be spoken for?" (S.S. VIII, 8). 'The "little sister" is the Community of Israel, who is called the Holy One's sister; "she hath no breasts", i.e. when they approached Mount Sinai she had no merits, no good works to protect her; "what shall we do to our sister?", when the Holy One shall reveal Himself on Mount Sinai to proclaim the words of the Torah, and her soul will fly away (out of fear).' Said R. Jose: 'When the Israelites approached Mount Sinai, on that night which followed the three days during which the people abstained from conjugal intercourse, the

heavenly angels came and received them with brotherly affection. For as they are angels above, so are the Israelites angels below; as they sanctify the Supreme Name above, so do the Israelites sanctify it below. And the Israelites were crowned with seventy crowns on that night. Then it was that the angels said: "We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts. What shall we do to our sister? How should we honour her on the day when the Holy One will reveal Himself to give her the Torah?" '

R. Simeon said that when the Holy One came to reveal Himself [81a] on Mount Sinai, He called together His whole celestial Family and said to them: "At present the Israelites are like children, they will not know how to deport themselves in My Presence. If I should reveal Myself to them in the attribute of Power (*Geburah*) they will not be able to bear it, but when I manifest Myself to them in love (*Raḥamim*) they will accept My Law." Therefore the manifestation on Mount Sinai took place on the third day, which is the Day of love (*Raḥamim*). In this manner did He reveal Himself first in Love; and then gave them the Torah from the side of Power; and that on the third day, for it is because of the "Three" that they are called Israel; and in the morning, in "a morning without clouds" (2 Sam. XXIII, 4), since had it been a cloudy morning darkness would have been found in it, and Grace would not have been revealed. And when does Grace reveal itself? In the morning: "The morning is light"; for as soon as the day breaks Grace is manifested and Judgement passes away, but when the light of morning does not enter the judgements do not vanish away, as it is written: "When the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy" (Job XXXVIII, 7; i.e. the angels of judgement shout for joy as long as night continues); but as soon as those stars set and the sun shines, behold there is "a morning without clouds", and Grace is awakened in the lower world.' R. Jose said: 'The Holy One began to reveal Himself on Mount Sinai "in the morning", and we have been taught that it took place when the merit of Abraham, who "rose up early in the morning" (to sacrifice Isaac, Gen. XXII, 3), was aroused. '

AND THERE WERE THUNDERINGS (voices) AND LIGHTNINGS AND A THICK CLOUD UPON THE MOUNT, AND THE VOICE OF THE TRUMPET EXCEEDING LOUD. Said R. Abba: 'As *kolоth* (voices) is written in a defective form, it indicates that there were two voices united as *one*, the one emanating from the other: air[1] from water[2] and water from air, two that were one and one that was two.' R. Jose, however, was of the opinion that the defective form of the word, suggesting the singular, indicates that it is indentical with the "great voice that did not cease" (Deut. V, 19), for all other Divine voices do break off sometimes, for, as we have been taught, four times a year the "Voice" ceases, and chastisement is sent into the world, but this great and mighty Voice[3] never stops and never abates of its full force. We have been taught also that this Voice is "the voice of voices", the voice which contains all other voices. R. Judah said: 'The "Voice" unites air, fire, and water, and one voice makes another; hence the plural "voices".' "And lightnings." Said R. Jose: 'Therefore it says: "He maketh lightnings for the rain" (Ps. CXXXV, 7), flame being combined with moisture in a supernatural union of love and affection.'

R. Judah said that the Torah was given from the side of Power. Said R. Jose: 'In that case, it must have been given from the left side.' 'No,' replied R. Judah: 'the left was turned for the time into the right, for it is written: "From his right hand a fiery law to them" (Deut. XXXIII, 2). Contrariwise we read concerning Egypt's judgement: "Thy right hand, O Lord, glorified in power" (Ex. XV, 6); where the right hand has turned into the left (judgement).' "And a thick cloud upon the mount", that is, a mighty cloud which stayed in one spot without moving. "And the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud": this voice issued from the midst of the heavy cloud, as it is written, "When ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness" (Deut. V, 24). According to R. Judah, there were three grades of darkness: darkness, cloud, and thick clouds (*araphel*), and the voice came forth from out of their innermost depths. R. Jose said

[1] *Tiferеth.* [2] *Hesed.* [3] *Binah.*

that the innermost was the one referred to in the words "with a great and ceaseless voice" (Deut. v, 19).

Said R Abba: 'It is written: "And all the people saw the thunderings" (Ex. xx, 18). Surely it ought to be *heard* the thunderings? We have, however, been taught that the "voices" were delineated, carved out, as it were, upon the threefold darkness, so that they could be apprehended as something visible, and they saw and heard all those wonderful things out of that darkness, cloud and cloudy darkness; and because they saw that sight they were irradiated with a supernal light, and perceived things beyond the ken of all succeeding generations, and saw face to face (Deut. v, 4).' And whence did they derive the power so to see? According to R. Jose, from the light of those voices, for there was not one of them but emitted light which made perceptible all things hidden and veiled, and even all the generations of men up to the days of King Messiah. Therefore it says: "And all the people saw the [81b] voices"; they did actually see them. The word *koloth* here is preceded by the particle *eth*, which, as usual, indicates that we are to understand another object in addition to the one mentioned: in this case another voice from below, which gathered into itself all the light[1] emanating from the other voices in which they saw, in sublime wisdom, all the celestial treasures and all the hidden mysteries which were never revealed to succeeding generations and will not be revealed until King Messiah comes, when "they shall see eye to eye" (Isa. lii, 8). In this latter passage (Ex. xx, 18) also we find "fire torches" mentioned instead of the "lightnings" of the former. Both, however, mean one and the same thing; when the lightnings are quite formed and ready to appear they are called "fire-torches" (*lapidim*). The "voice of the trumpet" mentioned in the same verse is, according to R. Judah, that voice which is itself called "trumpet" in reference to the Day of Atonement (Lev. xxv, 9). According to R. Simeon, the "voice of the trumpet" is the "word which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord" (Deut. viii, 3), by which "man lives". It is greater and stronger than all lower voices. On it depends all; it is called "great voice", and also

[1] Shekinah.

a "still thin voice" (1 Kings xix, 12), i.e. a clear though tiny light which illumines all things, but a "still voice" also because men must be filled with awe and silence to hear it, as it is written: "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle" (Ps. xxxix, 2).

The text proceeds: "And when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off" (Ex. xx, 18). The same word (*wa-yanu'u*, they shook) is used here of the people as is used of the "posts of the door" in the Temple which moved when Isaiah saw his vision (Isa. vi, 4). And what do we read of Ezekiel when he saw the Presence? "And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber (*hashmal*), out of the midst of the fire" (Ezek. i, 4). The whirlwind, according to R. Jose, was symbolic of the breaking of the power of the four kingdoms. R. Judah added that according to tradition the strong wind which was stirred from the side of celestial Power (*Geburah*) came from the north, the special region hidden above, out of which justice emanates, as it does not say from "north", but from "*the* north". "The great cloud and a fire infolding itself" are the elements which awaken judgements three times a day from the region of Power. And what renders it endurable in spite of its severity? "The brightness" that surrounds it, the light which encircles it, so that the judgement is not too hard for men to bear. [82a]

R. Jose, the son of R. Judah, said that the Israelites at Mount Sinai saw more of the Divine than the prophet Ezekiel, and were all united with the supernal Wisdom. They saw five different grades of voices, by which five the Torah was given—the fifth being the "voice of the trumpet"—but Ezekiel saw but five lower degrees: whirlwind, great cloud, fire, the brightness, and the colour of amber. Said R. Eleazar: 'Of the Israelites it says: "Face to face hath the Lord spoken to you" (Deut. v, 4), but Ezekiel saw only a "likeness" (Ezek. i, 5), like one who looks through a partition.' Said R. Eleazar further: 'If the Israelites saw what no prophet ever saw, how much more true is this of Moses! How happy a

lot was his, who "was there with the Lord" (Ex. XXXIV, 28), and with whom He spake "in sight but not in riddles" (Num. XII, 8)!' R. Jose drew attention to the expression used of Ezekiel, "The word of the Lord came (*hayo haya*) unto Ezekiel" (I, 3), indicating that his vision lasted but for a short space of time. R. Eleazar remarked that the expression *hayo haya* suggests that he both saw and did not see, heard and did not hear (i.e. his vision and hearing were imperfect): as he says, he saw something *like ḥashmal*, but not actually *ḥashmal* itself; but of the Israelites it is said: "They saw the voices": every one according to his grade actually saw; for there is a tradition that they stood in groups and divisions, and each one saw as befitted it. According to R. Simeon, the chiefs of the tribes stood by themselves, the women by themselves, and the leaders of the people by themselves, five grades at the right and five at the left, as it is written: "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel"—these were five grades at the right; "your little ones, your wives, the stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water" (Deut. XXIX, 9)—these were the five grades who stood at the left. All these grades corresponded to the ten celestial grades, and to the Ten Words (Decalogue), which are Israel's eternal possession, the essence of all the commandments, the good portion of Israel.

We have been taught that when the Holy One revealed Himself on Mount Sinai all the Israelites saw the Divine manifestation as one sees a light streaming through the glass of a lamp, and by means of that light each one of them saw more than did the prophet Ezekiel, since those celestial voices were all revealed together, whilst to Ezekiel only the Shekinah was revealed in Her Chariot, and he but caught glimpses of it as though through many barriers. Said R. Judah: 'Blessed was Moses, concerning whom it says: "And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai . . . and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount", and blessed was that generation concerning whom it says: "And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai before the eyes of the whole

people." As the Torah, however, was given from the Right Hand ("from his right hand went a fiery law for them", Deut. XXXIII, 2), what essential difference was there between the manifestation to the people and the manifestation to Ezekiel?' R. Jose replied: 'On Sinai the "Head" and the "Body" of the King were revealed, as it is written: "He bowed the heavens and came down" (2 Sam. XXII, 10); but to Ezekiel it was, as it were, only the "Hand" which was shown: "And the hand of the Lord was there upon him" (Ezek. I, 3). And even the "Hand" has two aspects, a higher and a lower. Observe that he says: "The heavens were opened and I saw visions (*maroth*) of God" (Ezek. I, 1). "*Maroth*" is written in a defective form, to indicate that he merely had a vision of the Shekinah.' Said R. Jesse: 'But is the Shekinah not a representation of the whole of the Deity?' R. Jose replied: 'The "Head" of the King is not to be compared to His "Feet", although both are in the "Body" of the King.' Observe that Isaiah said "I saw (*eth*) the Lord" (Isa. VI, 1), but Ezekiel said "I saw visions of God".' They meant, however, the same thing, and both belonged to the same grade (of spiritual perception). [82b] Why, then, did Isaiah not give a detailed account of his visions, like Ezekiel? According to R. Jose, it was necessary that Ezekiel should speak in a detailed manner in order to impress the people in exile with the fact that the Holy One loved them, and that the Shekinah and Her Chariots had gone down into exile also, to be present with them.

R. Ḥiya asked, why did the Shekinah reveal Herself in "the land of the Chaldeans" (Ezek. I, 3), of which it says: "Behold the land of the Chaldeans, a people which is not" (Isa. XXIII, 13, i.e. degraded)? If it was for Israel's sake, surely She could have been present among them without manifesting Herself in that inauspicious place? However, had She not revealed Herself the people would not have known that She was with them. Besides, the revelation took place "by the river Chebar" (Ezek. I, 3), by undefiled waters where impurity has no abode, that river being one of the four which issued from the Garden of Eden.[1] It was there,

[1] *v.* Zohar, Genesis, 85*a*.

and nowhere else, then, that "the hand of the Lord was upon him", as is directly stated.

R. Ḥiya also expounded, in accordance with the esoteric teaching, Ezekiel's vision: "Out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures (*Ḥayoth*), and this was their appearance, they had the likeness of a man" (*Ibid.* v, 5), saying that there is a sacred Hall in which dwell four living Creatures, which are the most ancient celestial beings ministering to the Holy Ancient, and which constitute the essence of the Supernal Name; and that Ezekiel saw only the likeness of the supernal Chariots, because his beholding was from a region which was not very bright. He furthermore said that there are lower beings corresponding to these upper ones, and so throughout, and they are all linked one with another. Our teachers have laid down that Moses derived his prophetic vision from a bright mirror (cf. Midr. Lev. R., p. 145*d*), whereas the other prophets derived their vision from a dull mirror. So it is written concerning Ezekiel: "I saw visions of God", whereas in connection with the difference between Moses and all other prophets it says: "If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known to him in a vision. . . . My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all my house: and with him I will speak mouth to mouth" (Num. XII, 7–8). R. Jose remarked that all the prophets are in comparison with Moses like females in comparison with males. The Lord did not speak to him in "riddles" (*Ibid.*), but showed him everything clearly. Blessed, indeed, was the generation in whose midst this prophet lived!

Said R. Jose the son of R. Judah: 'The Israelites saw the splendour of the glory of their Lord face to face; and, moreover, there were neither blind, nor lame, nor deaf, among them: they all saw (Ex. XX, 18); they all stood (*Ibid.* XIX, 17); they all heard (*Ibid.* XIX, 8). And of the Messianic Age it says: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing" (Isa. XXXV, 5–6).'

AND GOD SPAKE ALL THESE WORDS SAYING. R. Judah reflected here on the verse: "Who can utter the mighty

acts of the Lord? Who can show forth all his praise?" (Ps. CVI, 2). Said he: 'In how many ways does the Torah testify to the glory of God and admonish man not to sin! How many are the forms in which it counsels him not to turn from the way, either to the right or to the left! And how numerous the signs which it scatters in his way to lead him back into the true path so that he may return to the Lord and receive forgiveness! We have been taught that the Holy One, blessed be He, gave six hundred and thirteen counsels unto man, in order that he might be perfect in attachment to his Lord, for the Holy King desires only his good, both in this world and in the world to come; but more especially in the world to come, since whatever good the Holy One bestows upon man in this world is taken from the sum of good which he is entitled to receive in the world to come. Why is this? Because, as we have been taught, the world to come is, as it were, God's own possession. This is not to say, of course, that this present world is not His also, but, as it has been said, it is like unto an antechamber in comparison with the hall itself;[1] and the reward of a truly worthy man is taken from that which is God's very own, as it says of the tribe of Levi: "He shall have no possession among his brethren, for the Lord is his possession" (Deut. XVIII, 2). How happy is the lot of one who is accounted worthy of such a supernal heritage! He is indeed blessed in this world and in the "house" of this world, as well as in the world to come and in the heavenly holy House of that world, as it is written: "Even unto them I will give in my house and within my walls a place and a name . . ."(Isa. LVI, 5). [83*a*] Blessed is he who is worthy to dwell with the King in His own House.' Said R. Simeon: 'Blessed is he who is worthy of that most inestimable privilege which is foretold in the words: "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord" (*Ibid.* LVIII, 14). It does not say, "*with* the Lord", but "*in* the Lord", namely in the place from whence the upper and the lower worlds alike derive being, and to which they return, that sphere of which it is written: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help" (Ps. CXXI, 2), and again: "and

[1] Pirke Aboth, IV, 21.

came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him" (Dan. VII, 13). The longing and delight of the righteous is to contemplate that splendour from whence all lights emanate, and all celestial crowns are illumined.' R. Simeon continued: 'We have expounded the closing words of this verse, "I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth", to mean the supramundane world, called "heaven", and God is above this.' R. Abba said that "the Lord" here means Heaven, and the high places of the earth the "Land of the Living", consisting of Zion and Jerusalem which are above, the supernal heaven and the supernal earth. This, however, is quite in harmony with R. Simeon's interpretation, as it is all one celestial sphere. Then he said to R. Simeon: 'Would it please the Master to deign to interpret the whole verse, including the last words, "and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father" ?' R. Simeon then repeated what he had said before, and added that the last words are a reference to Isaac's blessing, "And God give thee of the dew of heaven" (Gen. XXVII, 28), this being "the heritage of Jacob". Now this blessing wherewith Isaac blessed Jacob was made in regard to that "heaven" of which we have spoken, and in these words he indicated that Jacob's children will rise again from the dead at the time of the Resurrection, by means of that heavenly dew, at the time when it shall issue forth from the Ancient of Days to the "Small of Countenance". R. Abba thought for a while, and said: 'Now everything is clear, and I see that there is even more significance in Isaac's blessing than I had thought.'

AND GOD SPAKE ALL THESE WORDS. According to R. Simeon, the word "spake" denotes a proclamation. When the Holy One revealed Himself and began to speak, the celestial and the terrestrial beings began to tremble mightily, and the souls of the Israelites left their bodies because of their mighty dread. Then the Divine word descended from heaven, being on its way engraved upon the four winds of the universe; and then rose once more and again descended. When it rose up it drew from the mountains pure balsam [83b] and was watered with the heavenly dew, and when it reached

this earth it encompassed the Israelites and brought them back their souls. Then it encircled them again and impressed itself upon the tablets of stone, until the whole Ten Words were designed thereon. R. Simeon said further that every word contained all manner of legal implications and derivations, as well as all mysteries and hidden aspects; for each word was indeed like unto a treasure-house, full of all precious things. And though when one Word was uttered it sounded but as itself, yet when it was stamped upon the stone seventy different aspects were revealed in it, fifty crowns less one on the one side and fifty less one upon the other,[1] "like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces" (Jer. XXIII, 29), and all Israel saw eye to eye and rejoiced exceedingly; and the souls of all the children of Israel, past and present and to be, born and unborn, were present there, that all might accept the Torah given on Mount Sinai, as it is written: "Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath, but with him that standeth here . . . and also with him that is not with us here this day" (Deut. XXIX, 13, 14). And every one according to his grade saw and received the Words.

AND GOD SPAKE. The word "God" (*Elohim*) here indicates that the proclamation emanated from the region of Power (*Geburah*); the next word, *eth*, that Geburah was joined with the Right Hand; the word *kol* (all), that the other Crowns were also associated; the word *hadebarim* (words), that the words issued continuously; the word *haeleh* (these), that they included all secret meanings, reasons, and penalties; and the word *lemor* (saying), that it was a heritage of all.

Said R. Isaac: 'Why was the Torah given in fire and darkness ? In order to show that he who is constantly and diligently occupied with the study of it will be saved from the fire of hell (Gehenna) and from the darkness of exile in heathen lands. It was the merit of Abraham which saved Israel from hell fire, as, according to tradition, the Holy One said to Abraham: "As long as thy children shall be absorbed

[1] i.e. the so-called "forty-nine aspects of clean and forty-nine of unclean". c. Midrash Rabba. Shir Ha-shirim, II, 4.

in the ways of the Torah they will be saved from punishment, but should they turn from her and forget her paths the fire of hell will have dominion over them and they will be subjected by the nations of the earth." And Abraham pleaded: "Two punishments are surely too much; if it be Thy will, let them escape hell fire and rather go into exile." The Holy One replied: "So be it then." And so it was. For this reason it says: "Their rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up" (Deut. XXXII, 30), meaning that Abraham, their "rock", was the cause of their going into exile; "and the Lord had shut them up" because He accepted Abraham's petition and abode by his choice.'

R. Judah said: 'Fifty days elapsed between the Exodus and the giving of the Law. Why was this? In order that the number of days should correspond to the number of years of the Jubilee, as it is written: "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty . . ." (Lev. XXV, 10).' R. Simeon remarked that it was the Jubilee which led Israel out from Egypt; that is to say the divine liberation emanated from the side of Jubilee, and from the same side was judgement stirred up against the Egyptians. For this reason the deliverance from Egypt is mentioned fifty times in the Pentateuch in such expressions as "I have brought thee out [84a] of the land of Egypt", "I have brought thee out with a strong hand", etc. R. Simeon further said: 'When the Israelites received the Torah the Jubilee crowned the Holy One, blessed be He, even as a king is crowned in the midst of his host, as it says, "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals" (S.S. III, 11). Who is His "mother"? The Jubilee. And the Jubilee crowned itself with perfect joy, as it is written: "The mother of the children rejoiced" (Ps. CXIII).' R. Judah said: 'Concerning this it is written: "Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bore thee shall rejoice" (Prov. XXIII, 25).'

Said R. Isaac: 'In the hour when the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself on Mount Sinai, that mountain began mightily to shake and all the other hills and high places of the earth trembled in accord with it, so that they

heaved and quaked until the Holy One stretched out His hand and calmed them, and a voice was heard: "What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest, and thou Jordan that thou wast driven back? Ye mountains that ye skipped like rams, and ye hills like young sheep?" And the answer was: "Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob" (Ps. CXIV, 5–7). Now, "the Lord" in this verse refers to the "Mother" (*Binah*); "earth", to the "Mother" below (*Malkuth*); "the God of Jacob", to the Father (*Hokmah*), whose "firstborn son is Israel" (Ex. IV, 23), whom "his mother crowned in the day of his espousals": she crowned him with the symbolic colours, white, red, and green, in which all other colours are included, and in him they were all united.' According to R. Judah, the "crown" symbolizes Israel, who is God's glory, as it is written: "Israel, in whom I am glorified" (Isa. XLIX, 3); "and I will glorify the house of my glory" (*Ibid.* LX, 7).

Said R. Isaac: 'The Torah was manifested in a black fire which was superimposed upon a white fire, signifying that by means of the Torah the "Right Hand" clasped the "Left Hand" that the two might be fused, as it is written: "from his right hand a fiery law to them" (Deut. XXXIII, 2).' Said R. Abba: 'When the smoke came out of Mount Sinai a fire ascended enveloped therein, so that its flames were of a blue colour. They flared high and dwindled again, and the smoke emitted all the aromas of Paradise, displaying itself in the colours of white, red, and black, as it says, "perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant" (S.S. III, 6). It was the Shekinah who manifested Herself thus at the giving of the Law in the wilderness on Mount Sinai, as it says, "Who is this (*zoth*) that cometh up from the wilderness like pillars of smoke?" (*Ibid.*)' Said R. Judah: 'But surely it is not necessary to go so far afield to discover this. Have we not the direct statement that "Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace" (Ex. XIX, 18)? Blessed were the people who beheld this wondrous thing and apprehended the mystery thereof!'

Said R. Ḥiya: 'When the letters were engraved upon the two tablets of stone they were visible on both sides of the tablets. The tablets were of sapphire[1] stone, and the letters were formed of white fire and covered again with black fire, and were engraved upon both sides.' According to R. Abba, the tablets were not engraved, but the letters fluttered on to them, being visible in two colours of fire, white and black, in order to demonstrate the union of Right and Left, as it is written, "length of days is in her right hand and in her left hand is riches and honour" (Prov. III, 16). But are we not told that "from his *right* hand (came) a fiery law to them" (Deut. XXXIII, 2)? The truth is that although the Torah emanated from the side of Power—that is the Left—the Left Side was included in the Right, and thus Justice was tempered by Mercy, which was symbolized by the two fires: white for Mercy, black for Power and Severity.

It is written: "And the tablets were the work of God" (Ex. XXXII, 18). They were indeed so, for, as R. Judah said: 'The word *ha-luḥoth* (the tablets) being written in a defective form, indicates that although they were two they appeared like one, and the Ten Words were engraved upon them, one section of five being included in, or superimposed on, the other five, so that they should be included in the emanations of the Right Side, that is, of Mercy; and in this way they were indeed the very "work of God".' [84b] R. Isaac said: 'They were originally two sapphire stones which were rough-hewn, but the Holy One caused a wind to blow upon them, which smoothed them and transformed them into two tablets.'

To this R. Judah demurred, maintaining that they only looked like sapphire, being in reality a new creation. 'This', he said, 'must be so, since it says that they were "the work of God".' To which R. Isaac retorted: 'But is not the sapphire, the most precious of all stones, itself a "work of God"?' Said R. Judah: 'Why then does it say that these specially were a "work of God"?' R. Isaac replied: 'It does not say that the *stones* were a special work of God, but the *tablets;* and the spelling of the word *luḥoth* (without *vau*)

[1] Heb. *sapirinon*, prob. *lapis-lazuli*, v. Jastrow, s.v.

suggests that the miraculousness was not so much in the stones themselves as in their formation as tablets, and in the writing.' Said R. Simeon: 'Both interpretations are correct. These two tablets existed from before Creation, but were perfected on the sixth day of Creation specially for this purpose; thus they were a special creation of the Holy One.' Of what were they formed? Of the supernal dew which issues from the Holy Ancient One, of which, when it was descending on the "Field of the Holy Apples", the Holy One took two drops, causing them to solidify and turn into two precious stones. Then He blew on them and they became flat like tablets. Thus both the stones and the writing were "a work of God", "written with the finger of God" (Deut. IX, 10). That "Finger" has the same symbolic significance as the "Finger of God" of which the Egyptian magicians spoke (Ex. VIII, 19), each "finger" expanding into ten until it becomes the complete hand, such as Israel saw at the sea.'

Said R. Judah: 'When it says that the "writing was . . . graven upon the tablets" (Ex. XXXII, 16), it means that the tablets were pierced, so that the writing could be seen from either side; the writing formed an engraving within an engraving.' According to R. Abba, it was possible from one side to see the other side, and read the writing thereon. Said R. Eleazar: 'They were written miraculously in order that every man might discern that it was "God's writing", being unable to find any other explanation of this double appearance. Besides, if the tablets were pierced, as has been suggested, why does it not say that the writing was graven "*in* the tablets" instead of "*upon* the tablets"? The fact, however, is, as we have been taught, that five Words were written on the right and five on the left, and those of the left were included in those of the right, and from (within) the right one could see those of the left, so that all was on the right, and all were fused one with the other. He who stood at one side could see (therein) what was on the other side and read it, for we have been taught that the Left was turned into the Right. Thus it was, indeed, "the writing of God". What happened was this: he who stood on one side read, 'I am the Lord thy God", and out of these letters he could see

the words, "Thou shalt not murder." Then he read, "Thou shalt not have (other gods)", and at the same time could see the words "Thou shalt not commit adultery". Then he went on reading, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain", and saw from the other side the words, "Thou shalt not steal", and so on. And conversely, if he looked at the other side.'

AND MOSES WENT DOWN UNTO THE PEOPLE AND SAID UNTO THEM. R. Jose asked: 'What is the point of this remark, seeing that we are not told what he said?' R. Isaac replied: 'It is well known that when a person is expecting some great good fortune or misfortune to befall him, before the event happens he is in a state of great nervous tension and can hardly control himself; but once the best or the worst is known, he regains his equanimity. Now in this case Moses actually prepared the Israelites for the great event which was about to take place, and yet when it came it almost overwhelmed them, so we may imagine what would have happened if he had not prepared them. And this is the meaning of "he said": he told them what was going to happen so as to fortify them beforehand. And with all this, as has been already mentioned, they could not endure the revelation when it came, for, as R. Judah said in the name of R. Hiya, in the name of R. Jose: "When the Israelites heard the words of the Holy One, their souls flew from them and ascended up to the Throne of Glory in order to cleave to it. Said the Torah to the Holy One: 'Was it then for nothing and to no purpose that I was fashioned two thousand years before the creation of the world? Is it all in vain that in me is inscribed "Every man [85a] of the children of Israel", "speak to the children of Israel", "the children of Israel are servants unto Me", "These are the children of Israel", and diverse other words of a like character? Where, then, are these children of Israel? At that hour the children of Israel received again the souls which had fled in the wake of the Divine splendour, for the Torah returned them every one to its own place; yea, she took hold of them and gave them back to their owners, each to the body which was its

proper dwelling. This is the significance of the words: "The Torah of the Lord is perfect, *returning* (*meshibath*) the soul" (Ps. XIX, 7): "returning" in the literal sense.'

There is a tradition concerning King Solomon, that when he first sat on his throne the Moon was in her fulness, as he was the fifteenth in descent from Abraham, the pedigree being Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Perez, Hezron, Ram (Ruth IV, 19), Aminadab, Nahshon, Shalmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David, Solomon. Therefore it is written: "Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord" (1 Chr. XXIX, 23), and also "six ascents had the throne", thus being a replica of the Supernal Throne. In the days of Zedekiah, the Moon was in her wane, and the face of Israel was darkened. He was the fifteenth from Solomon, his pedigree being Rehoboam, Abiah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Zedekiah. When Zedekiah came the Moon waned and remained thus, for it is written: "He (the king of Babylon) blinded the eyes of Zedekiah" (Jer. LII, 11). Then "He cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel" (Lam. II, 1). The earth was removed far from the heaven and became dark.

When the Israelites stood by Mount Sinai the Moon began to shine forth, as it is written: "He bowed the heavens and came down" (2 Sam. XXII, 10), meaning that the Sun approached the Moon, and the Moon began to shine, this being expressed in the words: "And on the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch throughout their armies" (Num. II, 3). On Mount Sinai was Judah appointed chief in the kingdom. R. Isaac found this expressed in the words: "But Judah still ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints" (Hos. XII, 1), which means, that when God was ruling in His Kingdom on Mount Sinai, Judah was ruling in his; when the Holy One said to Israel: "And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation", Judah was found faithful and worthy to receive the kingdom, and therefore the Moon began to shine.

I AM THE LORD THY GOD WHO BROUGHT THEE OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT. R. Eleazar referred to the verse: "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the Torah of thy mother" (Prov. I, 18). '"The instruction of thy father",' he said, 'refers to the Holy One; "the Torah of thy mother" to the Community of Israel.' According to R. Judah, "father" represents Wisdom (*Hokhmah*) and "mother" Understanding (*Binah*). Said R. Judah: 'Both interpretations mean one and the same thing, for we have been taught that the Torah emanated from the Supernal Wisdom.' R. Jose said that the Torah emanated from Understanding, for it says: "to perceive the words of understanding" and "forsake not the Torah of thy mother". Said R Judah: 'The Torah is an emanation of both Wisdom and Understanding, and combines the influence of both, for it says: "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the Torah of thy mother".' R. Abba said: 'It contains the influence of all the emanations, in virtue of containing those two: grace, judgement, and mercy, and every one required for perfection. When the King and the Matrona are in harmonious union all attributes are harmoniously united, and wherever these are found all the others are found as well.'

R. Jose said: 'The "I" in the first commandment represents the Shekinah, as in "I will go down with thee to Egypt" (Gen. XLVI, 4).' R. Isaac said that after "I" there is a pause, and the next words, "the Lord is thy God", refer to the Holy One, blessed be He, identical with the "Heavens", as it is written: "Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice" (Deut. IV, 36), and again, "Ye have seen that I have spoken to you from heaven" (Ex. XX, 22). The "who" (*asher*) which follows designates the sphere which all consider blessed (*ashar*) [85*b*]. The "bringing out of Egypt" designates the "Jubilee", as we have been taught that the "Jubilee" was the immediate cause of Israel's exodus from Egypt; for which reason this event is mentioned fifty times in the Torah. Fifty days passed from the Exodus to the Revelation on Sinai, and fifty years had to pass for the liberation of slaves. "From the house of slaves": as it is written: "The Lord smote all the firstborn of the land of Egypt" (Ex. XII, 29),

which, as we have been taught, signifies the lower "crown" which the Egyptians worshipped. For, indeed, as there is a "House" above, so also there is a "house" below; a holy "house" above—"with wisdom is a house builded" (Prov. XXIV, 3)—and an unholy "house" below, a "house of slaves".

We have been taught that when the "I" was proclaimed, all those commandments of the Torah which are united in the "Body" of the Supernal Holy King were comprised in it; for, indeed, all the commandments have their unifying centre in the "Body" of the King; some in the "Head", some in the "Trunk", some in the "Hands", and some in the "Feet", and none of them ever step out and become separate from the "Body" of the King or lose connection with it. He, therefore, who transgresses against even one of the commandments of the Torah is as though he transgressed against the "Body" of the King, as it is written: "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me" (Isa. LXVI, 24)—as it were, "against My very Self." Woe unto the sinners who break the words of the Torah—they know not what they do! And thus said R. Simeon: 'The Place against which a sin is committed itself reveals the sin. When a sin has been committed against the Holy One, it is He Himself who reveals it, as it is written: "The heaven shall reveal his iniquity and the earth shall rise up against him" (Job. XX, 27). "The heaven" signifies the Holy One; "the earth" the Community of Israel. We have also been taught that "heaven" reveals man's guilt and "earth" executes judgement on the sinners, as it is written: "The earth shall rise up against him." '

Said R. Jose: 'We have been taught in the name of R. Simeon that in the hour when the Torah was given to Israel Mother and children were together in perfect harmony, as it is written, "the mother of the children rejoiced" (Ps. XCIII, 9).' Thus "I" in this verse refers to the Shekinah, called "daughter" in the dictum "Abraham had a daughter, the Shekinah". "The Lord thy God" has the same reference as in the verse, "My firstborn son Israel" (Ex. IV, 22) (i.e. *Tifereth*); while the words "who hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt" refer to the mystery of "Jubilee" (the

Mother). Thus the Mother was there and the Children were there, all in joy and completeness; so that we apply the verse "the Mother of the children rejoices". Hence we have learnt that a man should be careful not to sin lest he cause the Mother to depart from the Children.' R. Isaac said: 'All these expressions refer to the Holy One, blessed be He, and this is a thing disclosed to the "reapers of the field".'

R. Eleazar said: 'From the fact that in one place it says: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth", and in another, "On the day when the Lord God made earth and heaven" (Gen. II, 4), it has been concluded that both heaven and earth were created as one; the Holy One stretched out His right hand and created the heaven, and then He stretched out His left hand and created the earth. Also, when it says: "And it shall come to pass on that day that I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth" (Hos. II, 21), it refers to the supernal heavens and to the supernal earth, the earth which is called "My footstool" (Isa. LXVI, 1). The significance whereof is that the heaven longed for the earth, that it might unite itself with her in the sphere called "Righteous", as it is written: "The righteous is the foundation of the world" (Prov. X, 25). From the head of the King to the place where this Righteous One commences flows a holy river [86*a*], the oil of anointment, which pours itself out in fulness of desire upon this earth; and the earth having received it therefrom nourishes all both above and below.'

Said R. Isaac: 'We read: "And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai" (Ex. XIX, 20); "He bowed the heavens and came down" (2 Sam. XXII, 10). Whither came He down? For the text tells us that He descended upon (lit. above) Mount Sinai and not *on to* Sinai.' R. Jose replied: 'He came down from grade to grade, from crown to crown, until He reached this "earth", and then the Moon shone and was revealed in completeness in the heavens. Hence it says, "He descended above Mount Sinai." What stands above Mount Sinai? Surely, the Shekinah.'

THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME (lit. before My Face). Said R. Isaac: 'This prohibition of "other

gods" does not include the Shekinah; "before My Face" does not include the "Faces of the King" (the Sephiroth), in which the Holy King manifests Himself, and which are His Name and identical with Him. That they are His name is shown by the verse: "I am YHVH, that is My Name" (Isa. XLII, 8). Thus He and His Name are one. Blessed be His Name for ever and ever.'

R. Simeon taught: 'Blessed are the Israelites, for that the Holy One calls them "Men" (Adam), as it is written, "Ye are my sheep; the sheep of my flock; ye are men" (Ezek. XXXIV, 31). Why are they called "men", in contradistinction to the heathen nations? Because they "cleave to the Lord their God" (Deut. IV, 4). When a Jewish child is circumcised he enters at once into the Abrahamitic covenant; and when he commences to keep the precepts of the Torah he enters into the grade of "man" and becomes attached to the "Body of the King" and so obtains the title of "man". Contrariwise Ishmael was a "wild man" (Gen. XVI, 12); he was only partly a "man": there were the beginnings of "manhood" in him, because he was circumcised, but this "manhood" did not come to fruition in him, because he did not receive the commandments of the Torah. But the seed of Israel, who were perfected in all things, they are "men" in the full sense: "For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (Deut. XXXII, 9).' Said R. Jose: 'Therefore the graving and painting of all forms is permitted, except the human figure.' Said R. Isaac: 'The reason is, because when a human figure is represented in sculpture or painting, it is not only the body which is fashioned in the image of the person, but as it were the wholeness of the man is being reproduced, his inner form, namely his spirit, as well as his outer bodily form': Said R. Judah 'This accords with the popular saying: "As the breath of the craftsman, so the shape of the vessel." '

R. Judah went once from Cappadocia to Lydda to see R. Simeon, who was sojourning there at that time, and R. Hezekiah accompanied him. Said R. Judah to R. Hezekiah: 'What R. Simeon taught us concerning the meaning of the term "wild man" [86*b*] applied to Ishmael is perfectly true

and quite clear, but what is the meaning of the second half of the verse: "and he shall dwell in the presence (lit. faces) of all his brethren" ?' R. Hezekiah replied: 'I have heard no interpretation and I shall not give any, for it is written: "And this is the Torah which Moses set before the children of Israel" (Deut. IV, 44). What was set by Moses we can enunciate; what he did not set we cannot enunciate.' Then said R. Judah: 'It is written: "For he is thy life and the length of thy days" (Deut. XXX, 20). He who is worthy of the Torah and separates not himself from her is worthy of two lives: life in this world and life in the world to come. But he who separates himself from her separates himself from life. And he who separates himself from R. Simeon separates himself from all things. Here is a verse to which he has already opened a door, and yet we cannot enter it nor penetrate further without his aid; how much more difficult then will it be for us to enter into the more recondite words of the Torah ! Woe to the generation from which R. Simeon will be removed ! As long as we are in his presence the springs of the heart are open on every hand to the apprehension of truth, and everything is unfolded, but as soon as we separate ourselves from him we know nothing and all the springs are closed.' Said R. Hezekiah: 'It is written: "And he took of the spirit that was upon him (Moses) and gave it unto the seventy elders" (Num. XI, 25). It was like a light from which many lights are kindled, and which yet retains its brightness. R. Simeon is such a light; he illumines everyone and yet his light is not diminished, but remains steadfast in its full splendour.'

They walked on until they reached the place where he was dwelling at the time. They found him absorbed in the study of the Torah. He was meditating aloud upon the verse: "A prayer of the afflicted (poor) when he is wrapped in darkness (languishing), and poureth out his complaint before the Lord" (Ps. CII, 1). He said: 'All prayers of Israel are effective, but the prayer of the poor man more so than all others. Why ? Because it reaches the Crown of the King's Glory and becomes, as it were, a garland for His Head, and the Holy One clothes Himself with this prayer as with a garment. "When

he is wrapped. . . ." He is not wrapped in garments, for he has none, being needy, but the word *ya'atof* has the same significance here as in the words, "the life of the young children that faint (*'atuphim*) for hunger" (Lam. II, 19). He "poureth out his complaint before the Lord". This is pleasing to the Lord, for the world is sustained by such. Woe unto him against whom a poor man complains to his Master! For the poor are nearest to the King. Concerning him the Lord says: "When he crieth unto me I will hear, for I am gracious" (Ex. XXII, 26), which signifies that the prayers of others are sometimes accepted and sometimes rejected, but the poor man's prayer is always answered. And why ? Because the King dwells in broken vessels: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit" (Isa. LXVI, 2). "The Lord is near to those who are of a broken heart" (Ps. XXXIV, 19): "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (*Ibid.* LI, 19). Hence we have learnt that whosoever wrongs a poor man wrongs the Shekinah. "For the Lord will plead their cause" (Prov. XXII, 23): their Protector is omnipotent; he needs no witnesses, no other judge, no pledge does he accept, except that of the soul: "and spoil the soul of those who spoil them (the poor)" (*Ibid.*).' He went on: ' "A prayer of the poor. . . ." Wherever the word "prayer" (*tephillah*) is mentioned, it signifies something precious, something which ascends to a supernal sphere—to the phylactery of the head worn by the King.'

At this point R. Simeon turned his head and saw R. Judah and R. Hezekiah approaching him. When he had finished his reflections he looked at them, and said: 'You look as if you had lost something valuable.' 'Yes,' they replied, 'for the Master opened a precious door and yet we cannot enter into it.' 'And what is it ?' said he. Said they: 'We refer to the verse concerning Ishmael: what is the meaning of the last words: "and he shall dwell upon the faces of all his brethren" ? The beginning of the verse is clear to us, but what of this ? We know not what the significance of these words is. The end does not seem to suit the beginning.'

'By your life !' replied R. Simeon, "both parts of the verse have one significance and point to the same truth. We know

that the Holy One has many aspects (faces) in His manifestations to men: He manifests to some a beaming face, to others a gloomy one; to some a distant face, [87a] to others one that is very near; to some an external, to others an inner, hidden aspect; to some from the right side, to others from the left. Blessed are the Israelites, for they are united with the uppermost "face" of the King, with the face wherein He and His Name are one. Contrariwise, the heathen nations are joined to the most distant "face", to the "lower face", and therefore they are at a great distance from the "Body" of the King. For we see that all those nations, like the Egyptians, for instance, who are related to Ishmael—for he had many brothers and relatives—were connected with the "lower", the "distant" faces of the Divine. Ishmael, however, when he was circumcised, had the privilege, for Abraham's sake, of having his dwelling-place and his portion in the sphere which dominated all those distant and lower faces, the faces of the Divine which are turned towards the other nations. Therefore it says of him: "His hand will be in all (*kol*[1]) . . . and he shall dwell upon the faces of all his brethren", namely, he will be in a superior sphere to any of the other heathen nations; he will rule over all the "faces" that are below.'

Then R. Judah and R. Hezekiah approached him and kissed his hands. Said R. Judah: 'This is an illustration of the proverb: "Wine settled on its lees and a bubbling spring are a wonderful combination."[2] Woe to the world when the Master will be removed from it! Blessed the generation that is privileged to hearken to his words! Blessed the generation in which he lives!'

Said R. Hezekiah: 'But have we not been taught that a proselyte when circumcised is merely called a "proselyte of righteousness" and nothing more? Yet according to thy interpretation of this verse, Master, "his hand will be in all (*kol*)"?' R. Simeon replied: 'Quite so! Ishmael was not merely a "proselyte", he was a son of Abraham, a son of the

[1] One of the lower grades of the Divine.

[2] i.e. R. Simeon combines deliberate judgement with a perennial flow of learning.

holy man, to whom the Lord gave the promise: "As concerning Ishmael, behold . . . I have blessed him" (Gen. XVII, 20); which "blessing" has a reference to the statement, "And the Lord blessed Abraham in all things (*kol*)"; which again is connected with the promise to Ishmael that "his hand will be in all (*kol*). . . ." This indicates that proselytes from among other nations, Ishmael's kin, would be called "proselytes of righteousness", but the nation whom he himself represents should be above them, "he shall dwell above the faces of his brethren".' Said R. Judah: 'Hence the commandment to Israel: "Thou shalt have no other gods upon My face", meaning "Thou shalt even avoid conceiving Me in those aspects (faces) which form Ishmael's religion".'[1]

THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE, OR ANY LIKENESS OF ANYTHING THAT IS IN HEAVEN ABOVE OR THAT IS IN THE EARTH BENEATH. We have already mentioned, in reference to this prohibition, the remark of R. Jose that 'all pictorial presentations are permitted, except that of a human countenance, because this countenance has dominion over all things'. R. Isaac applied to this commandment the maxim: "Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin" (Eccl. v, 5). 'How careful', he said, 'must one be not to err in regard to the meaning of the words of the Torah, and not to derive any doctrine from them which he has not learnt [from books] or heard from his teachers. He who gives his own interpretations of Scripture, not derived from these sources, transgresses against the commandment: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. . . ." The Holy One will punish him in the world to come, when his soul shall desire to enter into her place. She will then be thrust away, and she will be cut off from that region which is "bound up with the bundle of life" wherein are the other souls. Concerning such a man it is written: "Wherefore should God be angry at thy voice?" (*Ibid.*), "voice" symbolizing the soul.' Said R. Ḥiya: 'It is for this reason that to this prohibition are added the words, "for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God". God is "jealous" above all for His Name,

[1] i.e. Mohammedanism.

either because of the pictorial presentations wherewith His Name (character) is misrepresented, or because of the Torah when she is misinterpreted. For the Torah, as we have been taught, consists entirely of His Holy Name; in fact, every word written therein consists of and contains that Holy Name. Therefore one must beware of erring in regard to this Name and misrepresenting it. He who is false to the Supernal King will not be allowed to enter the King's Palace and will be driven away from the world to come.' R. Abba derived the same lesson from the words from this commandment: "Thou shalt not make . . . any graven image (*pesel*)", which he connected with the verse, [87*b*] "Hew (*pesal*) thee two tables of stone" (Ex. XXXIV, 1), interpreting thus: "Thou shalt not 'hew' unto thee another Torah, which thou neither knowest [from books], nor hast learnt from thy master; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God and shall punish thee in the world to come when thy soul shall long to enter into the spheres of glory and stand before My Presence." How many emissaries will then be ready to frustrate its desire and thrust it into Gehenna![1] According to yet another interpretation, this commandment includes the prohibition against the profanation of the sign of the Abrahamitic covenant, which sign is a symbol of the Holy Name. By means of this sign Israel entered into the first Covenant and union with the Shekinah, and he who brings it into a foreign domain is false to the Holy One Himself.

THOU SHALT NOT BOW DOWN TO THEM NOR WORSHIP THEM. As R. Eleazar was once walking in company with R. Hiya, the latter said: 'It is written: "When thou goest out to war against thine enemies . . . and seest among the captives a beautiful woman . . . thou shalt bring her home to thine house" (Deut. XXI, 10, 11). How can this be? Is not intermarriage with heathens prohibited?' R. Eleazar replied: 'This only applied to the seven nations[2] when they were independent in their own land. But mark this. There is no woman among the heathen nations who is free from taint.

[1] Al. "To hiss at it and to gaze at it in Gehenna." [2] v. Deut. VII, 7.

Therefore the section concerning the captive woman is immediately followed by that of the rebellious son, to indicate that children born of such a union are far from good, the impurity of idolatry inherited by the mother being difficult to remove; all the more so if she has been already married, as the taint of her husband cleaves to her. Hence the command of Moses to exterminate the Midianite women who were the cause of Israel's downfall in the wilderness (Num. XXV, 1–9; XXXI, 15–19). Blessed is the man who keeps in purity this heritage (the Covenant), for in this holy possession he unites himself with the Holy One, blessed be He, especially if he keeps the commandments of the Torah! The Holy One then stretches out His Right Hand to receive him, and he cleaves to the Holy Body. Concerning this it says of Israel: "And ye who cleave to the Lord your God" (Deut. IV, 4); "Sons are ye to the Lord your God" (*Ibid.* XIV, 1): literally "sons", as it is also written: "My firstborn son Israel" (Ex. IV, 22); "Israel, in whom I am glorified" (Isa. XLIX, 3).'

THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN. R. Simeon spoke in connection with this on the passage: "And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? Tell me, what hast thou in the house?" (2 Kings IV, 2). 'What Elisha meant', said he, 'was: "Hast thou nothing upon which the Divine blessing could rest?" For there is a dictum that it is prohibited to say grace after meals over an empty table, because the supernal blessing cannot rest on an empty place. It is therefore necessary to put a loaf or two on the table before saying grace, or at least the remnants of the former meal, in order that the blessing should not, as it were, be uttered "in emptiness". But when the woman said: "Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil" (*Ibid.*), the prophet replied: "Verily, this is fitted to receive a perfect blessing, as it is written: 'The good name (of God) can issue forth from good oil'" (Eccl. VII, 1). For the Holy Name comes forth from "oil", to bless and to kindle new lights. What is this "oil"?' Said R. Isaac: 'It represents the same "good oil upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard" (Ps. CXXXIII, 2,

the symbol of blessing, the instrument of which was the high priest).' R. Eleazar held that it represents the supernal mountains of pure balsam. R. Simeon interpreted the verse of Ecclesiastes thus: 'How good is the celestial name of the supernal holy lights, when they all radiate from the "good oil" we have mentioned! It is a sin to mention the Name of the Holy One in vain, in emptiness. A man who does that were better not to have been born.' According to R. Eleazar, this also means that one should not utter the Holy Name by itself, but only after a preceding word, [88*a*] as in the Torah it only occurs for the first time after two words: *Bereshit barah Elohim* (In the beginning God created). Said R. Simeon: 'In the Torah the Holy Name is mentioned only in connection with a completed world: "On the day when YHVH Elohim made the heavens and the earth" (Gen. II, 4).' From all this it follows that one should not mention the Holy Name in vain, that is, in "emptiness". One should utter the Holy Name only within a blessing or a prayer. But he who takes the Name in vain, neither in a benediction nor in a prayer, will be punished when his soul will be leaving him: "for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain". R. Jose further remarks in our Mishnah: 'What is the nature of blessing? It is the presence of the Holy Name in the blessing which makes it so significant, for this Name is the source of blessing to the whole universe. Therefore: "Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain."'

REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO SANCTIFY IT. Said R. Isaac: 'It is written, "And God blessed the seventh day" (Gen. II, 3); and yet we read of the manna, "Six days ye shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, in it there shall be none" (Ex. XVI, 26). If there was no food on that day what blessing is attached to it? Yet we have been taught that all blessings from above and from below depend upon the seventh day. Why, then, was there no manna just on this day? The explanation is that all the six days of the transcendent world derive their blessings from it, and each supernal day sends forth nourishment to the world below

from what it received from the seventh day.[1] Therefore he who has attained to the grade of Faith must needs prepare a table and a meal on the Sabbath eve (Friday) so that his table may be blessed all through the other six days of the week. For, indeed, at the time of the Sabbath preparation there is also prepared the blessing for all the six days that shall follow, for no blessing is found at an empty table. Thus one should make ready the table on Sabbath night with bread and other food.' R. Isaac added: 'Also on the Sabbath day.' Said R. Judah: 'One must regale oneself on this day with three meals, in order that this day may be one of satisfaction and refreshment.' Said R. Abba: 'One must do so in order that blessing may spread to those supernal days which receive their blessing from the seventh.' On this day the head of the "Little Face" is filled with the dew which descends from the Holy Ancient One, the Most Hidden One; He causes it to descend into the holy "Field of Apples" three times after the entrance of the Sabbath, in order that all unitedly may enjoy the blessing. Therefore it is necessary, not only for ourselves that we should have these three repasts during the day, but for all creation, for therein is consummated the true faith in the Holy Ancient One, the "Little Face", and the "Field of Apples", and we should rejoice and delight in all three. But he who lessens the number of the meals, as it were brings imperfection and blemish into the regions above, and great will his punishment be.' Said R. Simeon: 'When a man has completed the three meals on the Sabbath a voice proclaims concerning him: "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord." This is in reference to one meal, in honour of the Ancient, the All Holy. Then it proclaims, "and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth"—this in reference to a second meal, in honour of the holy "Field of Apples"; then, "and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father" (Isa. LVIII, 14)—completing the triad with a reference to the "Little Face". Correspondingly man should complete the number of three meals, and find joy and refreshment in all three and in each one of them separately, because this is a manifestation of perfected

[1] Here apparently = Binah.

faith. Therefore the Sabbath is more precious than all other times and seasons and festivals, because it contains and unites all in itself, whereas no other festival or holy day does so.'

Said R. Hiya: 'Because all things are found in the Sabbath it is mentioned three times in the story of Creation: "And on the seventh day God ended his work"; "and he rested on the seventh day"; "and God blessed the seventh day" (Gen. II, 2, 3).' R. Hamnuna the ancient,[1] when he sat at his Sabbath meals, used to find joy in each one. Over one he would exclaim: 'This is the holy meal of the Holy Ancient One, the All-hidden.' Over another he would say: 'This is the meal of the Holy One, blessed be He.' And when he [88b] came to the last one he would say: 'Complete the meals of the Faith.' R. Simeon used always to say when the time of the Sabbath meal arrived: 'Prepare ye the meal of the supernal Faith! Make ready the meal of the King!' Then he would sit with a glad heart. And as soon as he had finished the third meal it was proclaimed concerning him: 'Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father.'

R. Eleazar asked his father, R. Simeon, in what order the three meals corresponded to the three divine grades. R. Simeon replied: 'Concerning the meal of Sabbath night (i.e. Friday night) it is written: "I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth." In this night the Holy Matrona (Shekinah) is greatly blessed, and the whole" Field of Apples" also, and the man's table is blessed who partakes of his meal duly and with joy, and a new soul is added unto him. This night signifies the rejoicing of the Shekinah. Man therefore has to participate in Her joy and partake of Her meal. Concerning the second meal on the Sabbath day, it is written: "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord"—that is, in the very Lord (YHVH); for at that hour the Holy Ancient One reveals Himself and all the worlds are irradiated with joy, and we, in participating in this meal, contribute to that joy. Concerning the third meal it is written: "And feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father." This is the meal of the

[1] Al. R. Abba.

"Little Face" who is then complete in harmonious perfection, from which perfection all the six days that are to come will receive blessing. Therefore one must wholeheartedly rejoice in these meals, and complete their number, for they are meals of the perfect Faith, the Faith of the holy seed of Israel, their supernal Faith, which is not that of the heathen nations: "A sign between me and the children of Israel" (Ex. XXXI, 17). And mark this. By these meals the children of Israel are distinguished as the King's sons, as belonging to the Palace, as sons of Faith; and he who abstains from one of these meals causes an incompleteness in the regions above; thus such a man testifies of himself that he is not one of the King's sons, not of the Palace, not of the holiness of Israel's seed, and he will be made to bear the burden of a threefold punishment in Gehenna.

'Also mark this. On all festivals and holy days a man must both rejoice himself and give joy to the poor. Should he regale himself only and not give a share to the poor, his punishment will be great. Concerning such a one it is written: "Behold, I will reprove your seed and spread dung upon your face, the dung of your solemn feasts" (Mal. II, 3). This particular verse, however, applies only to festivals, not to the Sabbath. Similarly, the words, "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth" (Isa. I, 14), do not include the Sabbath. The unique character of the Sabbath is expressed in the words: "Between Me and the children of Israel." And because the Faith is centred in the Sabbath, man is given on this day an additional, a supernal soul, a soul in which is all perfection, according to the pattern of the world to come. What does the word "Sabbath" mean? The Name of the Holy One, the Name which is in perfect harmony at all sides.'[1] Said R. Jose: 'It is indeed so. Woe to him who does not help to complete the joy of the Holy King! And what is His joy? Those three meals of the Faith, the meals wherein Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob participate, and which express joy upon joy, the perfect Faith from all sides. On this day—so we have been taught—the Fathers crown themselves

[1] This idea is based upon the mystic significance of the three letters of the word Sabbath, *shin, beth, tau*.

and all the Children imbibe power and light and joy, such as is unknown even on other festive days. On this day sinners find rest in Gehenna. On this day punishment is held back from the world. On this day the Torah crowns herself in perfect crowns. On this day joy and gladness resound throughout two hundred and fifty worlds. Mark also this. On all the six days of the week, when the hour of the afternoon prayer arrives, the attribute of Justice is in the ascendant, and punishment is at hand. But not so on the Sabbath. When the time of the Sabbath afternoon prayer arrives benign influences reign, the lovingkindness of the Holy Ancient One is manifested, all chastisements are kept in leash, and all is satisfaction and joy. In this time of satisfaction and goodwill Moses, the holy, faithful prophet, passed away from this world, in order that it should be known that he was not taken away through judgement, but that in the hour [89*a*] of grace of the Holy Ancient One his soul ascended, to be hidden in Him. Therefore "no man knows of his sepulchre unto this day" (Deut. XXXIV, 6). As the Holy Ancient One is the All-hidden One, whom neither those above nor those below can comprehend, so was this soul of Moses hidden in the epiphany of God's good will at the hour of the Sabbath afternoon prayer. This soul is the most hidden of all hidden things in the world, and judgement has no dominion over it. Blessed is the lot of Moses.

'On this day the Torah crowns herself with all beauty, with all those commandments, with all those decrees and punishments for transgressions—in seventy branches of light which radiate on every hand. What it is to behold the little twigs which constantly emanate from each branch—five of which stand in the Tree itself, all the branches being comprised in it! What it is to behold the gates which open at all sides, and through which bursts forth in splendour and beauty the streaming, inexhaustible light! A voice is heard: "Awake, ye supernal saints! Awake, holy people, chosen from above and from below! Awake in joy to meet your Lord, awake in perfect joy! Prepare yourselves in the threefold joy of the three Patriarchs! Prepare yourselves for the Faith, the joy of joys! Happy are ye, O Israelites, holy in this world and holy

in the world to come! This is your heritage over and above that of all heathen nations—"a sign between Me and you!" ' Said R. Judah: 'It is indeed thus. Hence: "Remember the sabbath day to sanctify it"; "Be ye holy, for I the Lord am holy" (Lev. XIX, 2); "Call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable" (Isa. LVIII, 13).'

All the souls of the righteous—so we have been taught—on this day are feasted on the delights of the Holy Ancient One, the All-hidden. A breath of this rapture is extended through all the worlds; it ascends and descends, and spreads abroad to all the children of the holy, to all the guardians of the Torah, so that they enjoy perfect rest, forgetting all cares, all penalties, all toil and drudgery. It is the day on which "the Lord giveth thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve" (Isa. XIV, 3). Therefore the Sabbath is equal in importance to the whole Torah, and whosoever observes the Sabbath fulfils the whole Torah: "Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it: that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil" (*Ibid.* LVI, 2).'

R. Judai one day met R. Simeon on the road, and he asked him to explain the words of the prophet: "For thus says the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off" (*Ibid.* 4, 5). Said R. Simeon: 'Cappadocian![1] Get down from thy donkey and fasten it to a tree, or let him go behind, and do thou follow me! Holy Writ requires quiet and solemn contemplation.' He replied: 'It is for the Master's sake that I have undertaken this journey, and in following him I shall behold the Shekinah.' Then R. Simeon said: 'This subject has already been considered by the members of the Fellowship, but they have not explained it sufficiently. The "eunuchs" are, in fact, students of the Torah, who make themselves "eunuchs" during the six days of the week for the

[1] i.e. "rude fellow".

Torah's sake, and on Sabbath nights have their conjugal union, because they apprehend the supernal mystery of the right moment when the Matrona (Shekinah) is united with the King. Such adepts of the mystic lore concentrate their hearts on the Divine union, on the Faith of their Lord, and are blessed in their own union. Therefore it says: "that keep My Sabbaths", meaning "they keep them in their hearts", as in the expression: "But his (Joseph's) father kept the matter" (Gen. XXXVI, 11). They are "eunuchs" because they wait for the Sabbath, in order "to choose what pleaseth Me", namely His union with the Shekinah. Blessed is the man who is sanctified in this holiness, and comprehends this mystery. Mark this. It is written: "Six days shalt thou labour and do all [89b] thy work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God." "All *thy* work" : during the six days of the week man has to work, and therefore those who are absorbed in the study of the Torah have their conjugal union at a time when they do not work, but when the Holy One works. And what is His work then ? The union with the Shekinah, in order to bring forth holy souls into the world. For this reason the mystics sanctify themselves on this night in the holiness of their Lord with deep contemplation and concentration, and bring good and holy children into the world: children who turn neither to the right nor to the left, children of the King and the Queen: "Children are ye to the Lord your God" (Deut. XIV, 1)—His children in the most real sense. The world is sustained by the merit of these children of God, and when the world is placed on its trial the Holy One looks on these His children and exercises His pity and mercy. They are "altogether a seed of truth" (Jer. II, 21): a holy, perfect seed, according to the promise, "Thou shalt give truth to Jacob" (Micah VII, 20), and "truth" being the Holy One Himself, it means that He enters into their very self.' Said R. Judai: 'Blessed be the Merciful One who sent me here ! Blessed be He for that He has permitted me to hear thy words !' And he burst out weeping. 'Why dost thou weep ?' R. Simeon asked. 'I weep', he said, "because I think: Woe to the children of the world whose ways are the ways of beasts, without knowledge and understanding ! It

would have been better for them not to have been created. Woe to the world when thou, Master, wilt be removed from it ! For who will then unfold the mysteries of the Torah ? Who will then comprehend and grasp her ways ? ' Said R. Simeon: 'By thy life ! The world belongs only to those who occupy themselves with the Torah and know its mysteries. The Rabbis were right in their hard judgement on those who are ignorant of the Torah and corrupt their ways, not knowing their right hand from their left; for they are indeed like cattle, and it is fitting to chastise them even on the Day of Atonement. Concerning their children it is written: "They are the children of whoredoms" (Hos. II, 6).' Said R. Judai: 'Master, there is a certain peculiarity in the words of this verse. It is written: "even unto *them* will I give in my house and within my walls a place and a name better than sons and daughters", and then "I will give *him* an everlasting name, etc." Why first "them" and then "him" ?' R. Simeon replied: ' "House" here is the celestial region of which it says concerning Moses: "He is faithful in all my house"; the "walls" are those of which it says: "Upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen" (Isa. LXII, 6); "a place and a name" signify that they will draw holy souls from this celestial sphere which, in its harmonious perfection, is "better than sons and daughters"; and "to him", namely to this portion, God will give an "everlasting name". According to another explanation, "I will give him"—namely to him who comprehends this mystery, and knows how to concentrate on it with the right intention—"an everlasting name that shall not be cut off".'

R. Simeon also explained on that occasion the reason why it is written: "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day" (Ex. XXV, 3). 'It is', he said, 'because fire symbolizes judgement. As to the fire of the sacrifices on the Sabbath day, it rises to hold in check judgement; for, as we have learnt, "there is a fire which consumes a fire": the fire of the altar consumes the fire of judgement. Therefore the Holy Ancient One reveals Himself on this day (Sabbath) more than on any other day, and when He reveals Himself judgement is not in evidence at all, and all

the upper and lower celestial beings are in perfect joy, and judgement has no dominion.

'It is written: "For six days the Lord made heaven and earth" (Ex.xxxi, 17); it does not say "in six days", which indicates that the days themselves were a special creation. They are holy, supernal days, days in which the Holy Name is contained. Blessed are the Israelites more than all the heathen nations: of them it is written, "And ye who cleave to the Lord your God, ye are all alive today".' [90a]

HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER. R. Hiya connected this command with the words: "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden" (Gen. II, 10). 'The "river" he said, is the issue of the fountain which flows perennially and from whence the whole Garden of Eden is watered, and this issue[1] of the holy fountain is called *Ab*—"Father".' R. Abba said that Eden itself[2] is called Father—itself originating from the place called *Ain* (nought)—as we have laid down, that the place from which the Whole begins to take its being is designated both "Thou" and "Father", as it says: "For thou art our father" (Isa. LXIII, 16).' R. Eleazar applied the words "honour thy father" to the Holy One; "thy mother" to the Community of Israel; and the article *eth* to the Shekinah. R. Judah, however, held that, as "Father" and "Mother" in this commandment are not particularised, they include all aspects of the Divine, and the article *eth* between indicates all that is above and all that is below. R. Jose referred to R. Abba's remark that the sphere whence the "river" issues forth is called "Thou", and confirmed it by reference to the dictum: "What is hidden and has no beginning is designated 'He'; but the point where it begins to manifest itself is called 'Thou' and 'Father', and all are one." Blessed be His name for ever and ever. Amen. Said R. Hezekiah: 'Verily, they are all one: "honour thy father", namely the Holy One, blessed be He; "and thy mother", the Community of Israel. Thus the commandment includes all, both that which is above and that which is below.' According to R. Isaac, it also includes teachers of the Torah, for they are the means

[1] *Tifereth.* [2] *Hokhmah.*

of leading men to eternal life. R. Judah, however, held this to be included in the command to honour the Holy One, blessed be He.

We have a dictum that the first five commandments include by implication the other five as well: in other words, in the first five the second five are engraved, five within five. How? Take the first commandment: "I am the Lord thy God." Does it not include the first of the second five? Indeed it does, for the murderer diminishes the likeness and image of his Master, man having been created "in the image of God", and it is also written: "And upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man upon it" (Ezek. I, 26). Said R. Hiya: 'It is written: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man" (Gen. IX, 6). He who sheds the blood of a fellow-man is thus considered as diminishing the Divine archetype of man as well. Thus the first commandment, "I am the Lord thy God", contains the motive for the sixth, "Thou shalt not murder." The second commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods", contains the motive for the seventh, "Thou shalt not commit adultery"; for the adulterer perfidiously lies against the Name of the Holy One which is impressed upon man, a sin comprising many other sins and entailing corresponding punishments. He who is unfaithful in this is unfaithful towards the King, as it is written: "They have dealt treacherously against the Lord, for they have begotten strange children" (Hos. V, 7). One is the result of the other. The third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain", corresponds to the eighth commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." For a thief is certainly inclined to swear falsely, as it is written: "Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul, he heareth cursing and tells it not" (Prov. XXIX, 24). The fourth commandment, "Remember the sabbath day", corresponds to the ninth, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour"; for, as R. Jose said, the Sabbath is called a witness to God's creative activity, and man is required to testify to the fact that "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, etc." Hence R. Jose said: 'God has "given truth

to Jacob" (Micah VII, 20) in requiring Israel to keep the Sabbath; and he who bears false witness against his neighbour lies against the Sabbath—the witness of truth; and he who lies against the Sabbath lies against the whole Torah. The fifth commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother", implies also the tenth, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife"; for whosoever has a son born in adultery is "honoured" by him [90*b*] on false pretences. Further, it is written in the fifth commandment "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee", as much as to say, "what He gives thee is thine—but covet not what is not thine". Thus the first five commandments imply the second five. Therefore: "From his right hand went a fiery law to them" (Deut. XXXIII, 2); for all was included in the five fingers of the Right Hand. Therefore also was the Torah proclaimed in five voices, corresponding to the five Books of the Torah.' R. Eleazar taught that in the Ten Words (Decalogue) all the other commandments were engraved, with all decrees and punishments, all laws concerning purity and impurity, all the branches and roots, all the trees and plants, heaven and earth, seas and oceans—in fact, all things. For the Torah is the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He. As the Name of the Holy One is engraved in the Ten Words (creative utterances) of Creation, so is the whole Torah engraved in the Ten Words (Decalogue), and these Ten Words are the Name of the Holy One, and the whole Torah is thus one Name, the Holy Name of God Himself. Blessed is he who is worthy of her, the Torah, for he will be worthy of the Holy Name. Said R. Jose: 'This means that he will be worthy of the Holy One Himself, as He and His Name are one. Blessed be His Name for ever and ever. Amen.'

YE SHALL NOT MAKE WITH ME (*iti*) GODS OF SILVER, NEITHER SHALL YE MAKE UNTO YOU GODS OF GOLD. R. Jose read *iti* (with me) as *oti* (me), and interpreted thus: 'Although "mine is the silver and mine the gold" (Hag. II, 8), ye shall not represent Me (*oti*) in silver and gold.' R. Isaac connected the words, "Mine is the silver and mine the gold", with the verse: "For as much as there is none like unto thee,

O Lord; thou art great and thy name is great in power" (Jer. X, 7). "Thou art great" corresponds, according to him, to "Mine is the silver"; "and Thy Name is great" to "Mine the gold". These represent the two colours which are only visible in their full beauty when they are engraved in a certain place, namely Israel: "Israel, in whom I am glorified" (Isa. XLIX, 4). R. Judah illustrated from the verse: "I greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul is joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels" (*Ibid.* LXI, 10). He said: 'Blessed are the Israelites above all heathen nations, for that they have their joy in the Lord (YHVH, signifying Mercy) and their gladness in their God (Elohim, signifying Judgement). Thus does Israel say: "Whether He deals with us in Mercy or in Judgement we rejoice and are glad in Him." For these two attributes belong to His essential Being, as indicated by the words, "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation (*yesha*)", namely with the garments consisting of colours in which one can have a perception, a beholding, of Him (*shaah* = to look). He says: "He who would behold Me must behold My colours (the attributes of Mercy and Justice)." And these two colours are indicated by the words, "as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels". When these two colours are united their glory is such that all are aflame to behold their beauty.' R. Jose said that two kinds of joy are referred to in the words, "I greatly rejoice in the Lord", and one in the words, "my soul is joyful in my God". Said R. Judah: 'In each there is joy upon joy, but the joy which the Holy One shall vouchsafe unto Israel in the future will excel them all: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness" (Isa. XXXV, 10). "They shall return"; "they shall come with songs"; "everlasting joy upon their heads"; "they shall obtain joy and gladness"—the fourfold glad tidings corresponding to the four exiles of Israel among the nations (Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Roman). Therefore:

"Ye shall say in that day, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the peoples" (Isa. XII, 4).' [93b].[1]

The Ten Words contain the essence of all the commandments, the essence of all celestial and terrestrial mysteries, the essence of the Ten Words of Creation. They were engraved on tables of stone, and all the hidden things were seen by the eyes and perceived by the minds of all Israel, everything being made clear to them. At that hour all the mysteries of the Torah, all the hidden things of heaven and earth, were unfolded before them and revealed to their eyes, for they [94a] saw eye to eye the splendour of the glory of their Lord. Never before, since the Holy One created the world, had such a revelation of the Divine Glory taken place. Even the crossing of the Red Sea, where, as has been said, even a simple maid-servant saw more of the Divine than the prophet Ezekiel, was not so wonderful as this. For on this day all the earthly dross was removed from them and purged away, and their bodies became as lucent as the angels above when they are clothed in radiant garments for the accomplishment of their Master's errands; in which garments they penetrate fire without fear, as we read concerning the angel who appeared to Manoah (Jud. XIII, 20). And when all the fleshly impurity was removed from the Israelites their bodies became, as we have said, lucent as stars and their souls were as resplendent as the firmament, to receive the light. Such was the state of the Israelites when they beheld the glory of their Lord. It was not thus at the Red Sea, when the filth had not as yet been removed from them. There, at Mount Sinai, even the embryos in their mothers' wombs had some perception of their Lord's glory, and everyone received according to his grade of perception. On that day the Holy One, blessed be He, rejoiced more than on any previous day since He had created the world, for Creation had no proper basis before Israel received the Torah, as is implied in the words: "But for my covenant with day and night, I had not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth" (Jer. XXXIII, 25).

[1] 91a–93b belong to the *Sitre Torah* and the *Ray'a Mehemna*, and are too allusive to be made readily intelligible in a translation.

But when once Israel had received the Torah on Mount Sinai the world was duly and completely established, and heaven and earth received a proper foundation, and the glory of the Holy One was made known both above and below, and He was exalted over all. Concerning that day it is written: "The Lord is King, he hath put on glorious apparel; he hath put on his apparel, and girded himself with strength' (Ps. XCIII, 1). "Strength" signifies the Torah, as it is written: "The Lord giveth strength to his people; he blesseth his people with peace" (*Ibid.* XIX, 11). Blessed be the Lord for ever. Amen and Amen.

MISHPATIM

Ex. XXI, 1–XXIV, 18

AND THESE ARE THE JUDGEMENTS WHICH THOU SHALT SET BEFORE THEM. R. Simeon here introduced the subject of transmigration of souls, saying: 'Onkelos translates the above words as follows: "These are the judgements which thou shalt *order* before them". In other words, "These are the orders of the metempsychosis; the judgements of the souls, by which each of them receives its appropriate punishment." Associates, the time is now arrived to reveal diverse hidden and secret mysteries in regard to the transmigration of souls.

IF THOU BUY AN HEBREW SERVANT, SIX YEARS HE SHALL SERVE. When a soul is doomed to undergo transmigration, should it be one which has emanated from the side of the Servant, Metatron, who represents in himself six aspects, then the successive revolutions of that soul will not be more than six years (i.e. times) until it shall have completed the six stages which lead back to the region from whence it came. But if the soul has emanated from the sphere of the Shekinah Herself, who is symbolized by the number seven, it "shall go forth free", because its owner is righteous, and is not subjected to labour or servitude.'

Now it chanced that while Rabbi Simeon spake these things [94*b*] a certain "ancient one" came down to his side and said: 'If that be so, Master, where is the additional delight of the soul that emanates therefrom, indicated by the words, "In it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son nor thy daughter nor thy manservant, etc." (Ex. XX, 10)?, Rabbi Simeon replied: 'O venerable companion! Should a man of thy learning ask this? This verse assuredly speaks of the soul of the Righteous One, teaching us that even though she may have to undergo transmigration in any of these, even in a manservant or maidservant or in any animal, yet "in it thou shalt do no manner of work", or, what amounts to the same thing, "thou shalt not make him serve as a bondman". But, old man, the difficulty is this. Seeing that Sabbath is an only daughter, and that she is the mate of the Righteous One, what is meant by the words in our text, "if he take him another wife"?' He replied: 'These words refer to the weekdays.' 'What do these symbolize?' he asked. 'These', he said, 'are the bondmaid who is the body of the only daughter. Observe this. There is a soul which is called handmaid, and there is also a soul which is called the daughter of the king. Now as for the soul which is doomed to undergo transmigration, if she is the daughter of the Holy One, blessed be He, we cannot suppose that she is sold to an alien body that is under the domination of the evil spirit emanating from the side of Samael, since it is written: "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another" (Isa. XLII, 8). Nor is it to be thought that the body which harbours the daughter of the king shall be sold into the power of earthly crowns of defilement. Against this the Scripture says: "And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity" (Lev. XXV, 23). Which is the body of the King's daughter? Metatron; and this same body is identical with the handmaid of the Shekinah. Nevertheless, the soul that is the King's daughter is held prisoner therein, having to undergo transmigration.

'According to another interpretation, "man" here signifies the Holy One, blessed be He; "his daughter" denoting the Community of Israel, who emanates from the sphere of the "Only Daughter". The verse therefore indicates that when God delivers His people from the nations of the world "she shall not go out" as the menservants do, namely, as the children of Israel did when they left Egypt in haste. For at that time they were in the grade of "servants", represented by Metraton, who is but the bearer of the Shekinah; but in the days of the Messiah they shall "not go out with haste, nor go by flight" (Isa. LII, 12) from their captivity. See, now. When a human being is born into the world he is given a soul (*nephesh*) from the primordial "animal" sphere, the sphere of purity, the sphere of those who are designated "Holy Wheels"—namely, the supernal order of angels. If he is more fortunate he will be endowed with a spirit (*ruah*)

which appertains to the sphere of the Holy *Ḥayoth*. Should he possess still greater potential merit he is given a soul (*neshamah*) from the region of the Throne. These three grades of personality are the "maidservant", the "manservant", and the "bondwoman" of the King's daughter. And if the newly created being deserves still more, the soul which is put into his bodily form derives through a process of emanation (*aẓiluth*) from the sphere of the "Only Daughter", and is itself called "the King's daughter". If his merit is still greater he will be endowed with a spirit (*ruaḥ*), deriving through emanation from the sphere of the "Central Pillar", and its owner is then called "The son of the Holy One", as it is written: "Sons are ye to the Lord your God" (Deut. XIV, 1). Should he be of even greater worth he is given a soul (*neshamah*) from the sphere of Father and Mother, concerning which it is written: "And he breathed into his nostrils the breath (*nishmath*) of life" (Gen. II, 7). What does "life" signify ? It signifies the Divine Name YH; and therefore it is written of such souls: "Let the whole soul (all souls) praise JaH" (Ps. CL, 6). But if he should acquire still greater merit, the Holy Name YHVH is granted to him in its fulness—the letters *Yod*, *Hé*, *Vau*, *Hé*, representing Man in the sphere of the supernal *Aẓiluth*, and he is said to be "in the likeness of his Lord", and in him the words, "Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing" (Gen. I, 28), are properly fulfilled: for his dominion is indeed over all the firmaments and over all the Wheels and Seraphim and Living Beings (*Ḥayoth*) and over all the hosts above and below. It is therefore concerning one who has attained to the sphere of the "Only Daughter" and has derived his soul from thence that it says, "She shall not go out as the menservants do".'

R. Ḥiya and R. Jose met one night at the tower of Tyrus, and greatly enjoyed one another's company. Said R. Jose: 'How glad am I to behold the countenance of the Shekinah ! For during the whole of my journey here I was molested by the chatter of an old carrier who pestered me with all sorts of foolish questions; [95a] for example, "Which serpent is it that flies in the air whilst an ant lies undisturbed between

its teeth ? What is it that begins in union and ends in separation ? Which eagle is it whose nest is in a tree that does not yet exist, and whose young ones are plundered by creatures who have not yet been created, and in a place which is not ? What are those which when they ascend descend, and when they descend ascend ? And what is it two of which are one and one of which is three ? And who is the beautiful virgin who has no eyes and whose body is concealed and yet revealed—revealed in the morning and concealed during the day, and who is adorned with ornaments which do not exist ?" So he went on plaguing me the whole of the way. But now I shall have peace and quiet, and we can devote ourselves to discussing the Torah instead of wasting time in empty talk.' Said R. Ḥiya: 'Dost thou know anything of the old man ?' R. Jose replied: 'I only know that there is nothing in him; for if there were, he would have expounded some text of Scripture, and the time spent on the road would not have been profitless.' 'Is the old man in this house ?' asked R. Ḥiya. 'For sometimes it happens that in vessels that seem empty grains of gold can be discovered.' 'Yes,' replied R. Jose, 'he is here, preparing fodder for his donkey.' So they called the carrier and he came to them. The first thing the old man said was: 'Now the two have become three, and the three one !' Said R. Jose: 'Did I not tell thee that he only talks nonsense ?' The old man seated himself and said: 'Sirs, it is only recently that I have become a carrier. I have a young son whom I send to school, and whom I wish to bring up in the study of the Torah; so whenever I see a scholar on my way I follow him in the hope of picking up some new idea in connection with the Torah; but to-day I have heard nothing new.' Said R. Jose: 'Of all the things I heard you say, one specially surprised me, because it showed exceptional folly in a man of your years, or else you did not know what you were saying.' Said the old man: 'What do you refer to ?' Said R. Jose: 'That about the beautiful virgin and so forth.'

Then the old man began thus: ' "The Lord is on my side, I am not afraid ; what can men do unto me ? . . . It is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in princes" (Ps. CXVIII, 6, 9). How good, how lovely, how precious, how

supernal are the words of the Torah. Shall I tell them in the presence of scholars from whom so far I have not heard even one word of enlightenment? However, I feel impelled to speak, and surely there is no need to be shy in speaking of things spiritual to anyone, whether scholars or no.' The old man then drew his cloak round him, opened his mouth, and said: 'It is written: "If a priest's daughter be married unto a stranger, she may not eat of an offering of holy things" (Lev. XXII, 12). Now this verse is followed by another verse: "But if the priest's daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's meat, but there shall no stranger eat thereof" (*Ibid.* 18). These verses are plain enough in the literal sense, but the words of the Torah have also an esoteric significance, and every word therein contains hidden seeds of wisdom, comprehensible only to the wise who are familiar with the ways of the Torah. For, truly, the words of the Torah are not mere dreams. And even dreams have to be interpreted according to certain rules; how much more, then, is it necessary that the words of the Torah, the delight of the Holy King, be explained in accordance with the right way! And "the ways of the Lord are upright" (Hos. IV, 10). Now, "the priest's daughter" is the superior soul, the daughter of our father Abraham, the first of proselytes, who drew this soul from a supernal region. [95b] And "a priest's daughter married unto a stranger" refers to the holy soul which emanates from a supernal region and enters into the hidden part of the Tree of Life. And when the breath of the supernal Priest has breathed souls into that Tree, those souls fly away from there and enter a certain treasure-house. Woe unto the world that knows not how to guard itself! Men draw down the soul along with their evil inclination, which is "the stranger", and this "priest's daughter", the soul, flies down to earth and finds her edifice in a "stranger"; and because it is the will of her Master, she enters there and bears the yoke, and cannot assert herself or become perfected in this world. So when she leaves this world she "may eat of an offering of holy things", like those souls which have perfected themselves in this world.

There is still another significance to this verse: it is a great humiliation for the holy soul to enter into a "stranger", namely into a proselyte, for then she has to fly from Paradise into a habitation builded from an uncircumcised and unclean source. There is here, however, a still deeper mystery. Near to the pillar which supports the wheels where the souls are blown in there are two weighing scales, one at each side: these are the "weights of righteousness" and "weights of deception" which never cease to move, and souls rise and fall thereon, and appear and disappear. There are souls which are violently captured and oppressed when "man ruleth over man to his own hurt" (Eccl. VIII, 9). For this world is entirely directed by the "tree of knowledge of good and evil", and when human beings walk in the way of righteousness the scales are weighted on the side of good, and when they walk in the evil way they incline towards the evil side. And all souls found then on the scales are violently caught by the evil side. But this is "to its own hurt"; for these souls tread down and destroy all that they find on the evil side, just as the Philistines captured the holy Ark to their own hurt. And what becomes of these souls? In ancient books it is written that some of them become the souls of pious Gentiles and scholarly bastards of Jewish origin, who, because of their learning, are of a higher merit than even a high priest who has no divine knowledge, although by virtue of his office he enters into the Holy of Holies.'

The old man here stopped and wept for a moment. The two companions were astonished but said nothing, and after a while he continued to speak on the following verse: IF SHE (the maidservant) PLEASE NOT HER MASTER, WHO HATH BETROTHED HER TO HIMSELF, THEN SHALL HE LET HER BE REDEEMED; BUT TO SELL HER TO A STRANGE NATION, HE SHALL HAVE NO POWER (v. 8). 'This passage', said he, 'continues the inner meaning of the "man who sells his daughter as a maidservant". It is written: "Who would not fear thee, O king of the nations? For it becometh thee, as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee" (Jer. X, 7). How many people misunderstand this verse! They repeat

the words, but the sense escapes them. Is the Holy One, blessed be He, the "King of the nations" ? Is He not rather the King of Israel ? Is it not written: "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of men, he set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people" (Deut. XXXII, 8, 9), wherefore He is called the "King of Israel" ? If the prophet here called God "King of the nations", he would be praising them more than they praise themselves, for they only claim to be in the charge of His ministers and servitors. The last part of the verse also contradicts this idea, for it says: "As among all the wise men of the nations . . . there is none like unto thee." Seeing that the other nations have so much to boast of, it is surprising that with this verse they do not ascend to the very heaven. [96a] But in truth the Holy One, blessed be He, has blinded their eyes, and "all nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity" (Isa. XL, 17). This is the real truth of the matter in their regard.' Said R. Hiya: 'And yet it is written: "God reigneth over the nations" !' The old man replied: 'I see that thou hast been behind their wall, and hast come forward to support them with this verse. I ought first to deal with my own difficulty; but since I have found thee in the way, I will first remove thee, and then go on to remove all other obstacles. See, now. All the Names of the Holy One, blessed be He, and all subsidiary Names, ramify in different directions and are encircled in each other, as it were, and yet branch out into various paths. Only one aspect is not so scattered: and that is the one definite and particular Name, which is the heritage of the one particular people, namely, the Name YHVH; for it is written: "For the portion of YHVH is His people"; "And ye who cleave to YHVH" (Deut. XXXII, 9, IV, 4), which signifies those that cleave to this very Name itself. Thus it is seen that this Name YHVH belongs only to Israel. Above all the other names is one which spreads and separates itself towards many diverse ways and paths, to wit, Elohim. This name has been transmitted to the beings of this lower world, and has been shared among the Chieftains and

ministering angels who guide other nations. Hence we read: "And Elohim came to Balaam by night" (Num. XXII, 20); "And Elohim came to Abimelech in the dream of the night" (Gen. XX, 3): and the same is true of all the principalities and powers appointed over the nations—all are included in this Name, yea, even their objects of worship find a place therein; and so it is this name and aspect of the Divinity which reigns over the nations, but not the peculiar Name, for in that they have no part, since it reigns over Israel only: the one nation, the holy nation. This, however, does not mean that the words, "Who would not fear thee, O King of the nations", are to be interpreted in this sense, namely, that He is the King of the nations in His attribute of Elohim, representing severity and justice; for, as I have pointed out, this Name signifies even the objects of pagan worship. Since, then, the wall on which you were leaning has been shaken, use a little subtlety to get to the true meaning of the words. This is: "Who is the king of the nations that would not fear thee ?" The inversion of the order is similar to that found in the verse: "Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye servants of the Lord" (Ps. CXIII, 1), which does not mean that the servants of the Lord shall be praised, but is to be read as "Servants of the Lord, praise ye the Lord." '

The two companions rejoiced and wept, but said nothing. The old man also wept, even as he had done before. Then he went on: 'It is written: "And she (Sarah) said unto Abraham, Cast out the bondwoman and her son" (Gen. XXI, 10), which has been interpreted by the scholars to signify that Sarah desired to cleanse her house from idolatry, and that therefore Abraham was told: "In all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice" (*Ibid.* V, 12). Now here we read, "And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall go out as the menservants do", which, being interpreted, means: When the soul is made to undergo transmigration because of the evil works of this world, when she is "sold" to be a "maidservant"—that is, delivered into the hands of the impure principle through the evil revolution of the wheel, so that she is wrenched violently away from the scale of souls —when her time thus comes to "go out", she shall not go

out as the menservants do. And what sort of souls are these which are so violently despoiled and taken away ? There is a mystery behind this. They are the souls of infants still at the breast. The Holy One, seeing that should they continue in this world they would lose their sweet savour, their aroma of purity, and, as it were, turn sour like vinegar, gathers them in their infancy while their savour is still sweet, and allows them to be wrenched away by that "maidservant", namely Lilith, [96*b*] who, when they have been delivered into her power, gloatingly carries them away to other regions. Do not imagine that had they not been so removed they could have done any good in the world. For therefore it is written, "If she (the soul) pleases not her master", that is, the man in whom it is lodged will cause it to turn sour in course of time. Such a one is wrenched away, but no other. Yet, on the other hand, it does not mean that the Holy One has pre-ordained such a soul to be under the domination of impurity from the very day of her creation. Not at all ! For in the revolution of the wheel, when the soul gives forth a good savour, "shall he let her be redeemed", namely, the Holy One will redeem her from her sore bondage and raise her unto the highest heights to be with Him. And it should not be imagined that because she had been once purloined by the impure power the Holy One will condemn her perpetually to enter into the bodies of pious Gentiles or scholarly bastards. No ! "To sell her into a strange nation, he shall have no power." She will re-enter into the body of an Israelite and not into a stranger. And when she shall be redeemed from the bondage of the "wheel of impurity", "she shall not go out as the menservants do", but receive her crown with uplifted head. Nor is one to imagine that the "side of impurity" has put the soul in the child: for the impure power only snatched, as it were, at that soul and played with it until it entered into the body of that child. But the impure power visits the child occasionally and longs to possess his body. And after some time the Holy One takes into His own guardianship the soul, and the evil power attains mastery over the body. But eventually body and soul become the possession of the Holy One (in the Resurrection).

' "She shall not go out as the menservants do." What does

this mean ? When the soul emerges from the scales, and the side of righteousness rejoices, the Holy One, blessed be He, stamps upon her the impress of a seal; and He likewise spreads about her His costly garment—namely the Holy Name *Elohah*. This is indicated by the words in the text, "*be-bigdo bah*" (when his garment is upon her, v. 8), for they signify the costly *garment* (*beged*) of the King. Therewith she is guarded and so cannot be delivered to a "strange nation", but only to Israel. Concerning this it is written: "He guards me like the days of Elohah" (Job. xxix, 2). It is also of this mystery that we read here: "To sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath put *his garment* upon her." As long as this costly garment of the King adorns her, what power can the evil side have over her ? Observe this. All men are in the power of the Holy King, and all have their allotted time in this world; but for this one there is no appointed time, and therefore it mocks at the evil spirits and gloats over them. Many admonitions to mankind are contained in these verses, and truly much good and excellent advice is to be found in all the words of the Torah, for they are all true and lead to further truth and are comprehended as such by the wise who know that path and walk therein. When the Holy One, blessed be He, came to create the world, it pleased Him to form all the souls which were destined to be allotted to the children of men, and each was shaped before him in the very outline of the body she was afterwards to inhabit. He examined each one, and saw that some of them would corrupt their ways in the world. When the time of each was arrived, the Holy One summoned it, saying: "Go, descend into such and such a place, into such and such a body." But ofttimes it chanced that the soul would reply, "Lord of the world, I am satisfied to be here in this world, and desire not to leave it for some other place where I shall be enslaved and become soiled." Then would the Holy One respond: "From the very day of thy creation thou hast had no other destiny than to go into that world." At this the soul, seeing that it must obey, would descend against its will and enter into this world. The Torah, which counsels the whole world in the ways of truth, observed this, and proclaimed to mankind:

"Behold, how the Holy One has pity upon you ! He has sold to you for nothing His costly pearl, for you to use in this world, namely the holy soul." "If a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant"—that is, when the Holy One delivers His daughter, the holy soul, to be a maidservant, enslaved in bondage unto you, [97*a*] I adjure you, when her time comes, let her "not go out as the menservants do", polluted by sins, but free, illumined, and pure, in order that her Master may be able to find joy in her, and to give her goodly reward in the splendours of Paradise, as it is written: "And he shall satisfy thy soul with brightness (*zahzahoth*, lit. places lit by the sun)" (Isa. LVIII, 11); namely, when she shall ascend again thence, bright and pure. But should she "not please her Master", being polluted with sin, then woe to the body which has lost its soul for ever ! For when the souls ascend from this world in a bright and pure condition, they are entered into the King's archives, each one by name; and He says: "This is the soul of such a one: she belongs to the body which she left"; as it is written: "Who hath betrothed her to himself." But "if she pleased not her Master", that is, if she be polluted by sin and guilt, He does not again appoint that same body for her, and so she loses it for ever, unless the person should be roused to repentance, for then "shall she be redeemed"—as it is written: "He will deliver his soul from going into the pit" (Job XXXIII, 28); which signifies that man is advised to redeem his own soul by repentance and amendment. In fact, the words "he shall redeem her" have a double significance: they point to man's own redemption of his soul by repentance, followed by the redemption from Gehenna effected by the Holy One. "To sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power." Who is this "strange nation" ? Hapless is the soul when she leaves this world after being attached to a man who has turned away from the right path. She desires to ascend to the heights, in the midst of the holy hosts; for holy hosts stand along the way to Paradise, and "strange" hosts line the other way, to Gehenna. If, then, the soul is worthy and wears the precious protecting garment, multitudes of holy hosts stand ready to join her and accompany her to Paradise.

But if she hath not that garment, the "strange" hosts compel her to take the path which leads to Gehenna. Angels of destruction and confusion are they, who will gladly take their revenge on her. But "He shall have no power to sell her unto a strange nation", if "His garment is upon her", by which the Holy One guards her from the "strange nations" of the angels of destruction and despoilment.

'AND IF HE HAVE BETROTHED HER UNTO HIS SON, HE SHALL ACT TOWARDS HER AFTER THE MANNER OF DAUGHTERS. How careful should a man be not to walk in a crooked way in this world ! For if he shall have proved himself worthy in this world, having guarded his soul with all care, then the Holy One, blessed be He, will be well pleased with him, and will praise him daily to His celestial Family, saying: "Behold the holy son whom I have in that lower world ! See what acts he performed, how upright are his ways." And when such a soul leaves this world, pure, bright, and unsullied, the Holy One illumines her daily with innumerable radiances and proclaims concerning her: "This is the soul of my son so-and-so: let her be kept for the body which she has left." This is the significance of the words: "And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall act towards her after the manner of daughters." What is the meaning of these words, "after the manner of daughters" ? This is a secret entrusted to the keeping of the wise alone, and here is the substance thereof. In the midst of a mighty rock, a most recondite firmament, there is set a Palace which is called the Palace of Love. This is the region wherein the treasures of the King are stored, and all His love-kisses are there. All souls beloved of the Holy One enter into that Palace. And when the King Himself appears, "Jacob kisses Rachel" (Gen. XXIX, 11), that is, the Lord discovers each holy soul, and takes each in turn up unto Himself, fondling and caressing her, "acting towards her after the manner of daughters", even as a father treats his beloved daughter, fondling and caressing her, and giving her presents. "Ear hath not heard, nor eye seen . . . what he doeth to him who waiteth for him" (Isa. LXIV, 3): as that "daughter", the soul,

has done her work in this world, so will the Holy One "do" His work on her in the world to come.' [97b]

Then the old man prostrated himself in prayer, wept again, and continued: 'IF HE TAKE HIM ANOTHER ONE, HER FOOD, HER RAIMENT, AND HER CONJUGAL COHABITATION SHALL HE NOT DIMINISH. What does it mean by saying, "If he take him another one"? Does it mean that the Holy One will give another soul in this world to the righteous, and not the same one which already had fulfilled in this world the will of her Master? Surely not: for what good tidings would that be for the righteous? However, it is written: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccl. XII, 7). Now this verse the scholars have applied to the destruction of the Temple: the dust[1] thereof did indeed return upon the earth, so that it reverted to the state in which it was when "the Canaanite was there" (Gen. XII, 6), and the spirit, namely the Shekinah, when she saw that her ten stages were completed and yet Israel did not repent,[2] returned unto God, and since then the "other side" has had dominion over the Holy Land. All this has been established by the members of the Fellowship. Now the spirit (*ruah*) of a righteous man is adorned with its own form in the lower Paradise; and on sabbaths, festivals, and new-moons the spirits are crowned with new crowns, and ascend to the higher realms of Heaven. And as the Holy One deals with the supernal holy soul (*neshamah*) in the upper Paradise, so also He deals with this spirit in the lower Paradise: He brings it up before Him and says, "This spirit belongs to such and such a body." Then He crowns it with many crowns and finds His joy therein. This, however, does not mean that this occupation with the spirit interferes with the joy which the Holy One gives to the soul. "If he take him another one, her food, her raiment, and her conjugal cohabitation shall he not diminish." These are the three supreme Names which "no eye hath seen, apart from thee, O God" (Isa. LXIV, 8), all of whom are in the

[1] The *klifah*, or evil spirit.

[2] According to a tradition, the Shekinah departed from the Sanctuary at the time of the Exile in ten stages.

world to come and issue forth from thence. One is designated "*shĕĕrah*" (her food), namely, the emanation of the radiance, the source of which is undiscoverable. It is the food which nourishes all and is called YHVH with the vowel points of Elohim. The second is called "her raiment": the King's garment which is spread over the soul and protects her always, another emanation of light. And what does the "conjugal cohabitation" stand for? This is the abundance of light and life of the world to come wherein is all bliss. It is YHVH Zebaoth who shines forth with all the hidden lights of the Tree of Life, and wherein is concealed the mystery of conjugal relations and whence it emanates. These three manifestations of the Divine Grace shall "not be diminished" to the soul, if she be worthy; but if she be not so, then she will not be crowned with any of them: "If he do not these three unto her"—because of the soul's unworthiness—"then shall she go out free without money (*keseph*)" (v. 11). That is to say, the soul is then pushed away without yearning (*kisupha*) for union with the supernal light, and without the joy of possessing it.

'So far we have dealt with the good counsel which the Torah gives to the children of men: the Torah, which abounds in good counsel. But now let us return to our former subject, namely to the supernal garment which the Holy One spreads over the soul as an armour of protection so that she should not be delivered to a "strange nation". "And if he hath betrothed her unto his son, he shall act towards her according to the rights of daughters." 'Associates,' said the old man, 'When ye shall draw nigh unto that rock upon which the whole world is sustained (R. Simeon), then shall ye tell him to remember the day of snow whereon beans were sown of fifty-two kinds and colours,[1] and having recalled that day to his mind, recall also the fact that on it we read the above verse: which, when ye have awakened in him the memory thereof, he will then unravel for you himself.' But the companions demurred to this, saying: 'Nay, we pray thee: he who began must himself continue!' Said he: 'So be it then!

[1] Alluding to a discussion on the word *ben* (understanding), the numerical value of which is fifty-two.

For I know that ye are wise and righteous scholars, worthy to be informed of all the mysteries which have been entrusted to the keeping of the faithful. I shall indeed interpret; but when ye remind him by that sign and token which I have given you, he will duly supplement and complete my words. We must now explain who is he that is called "son" to the Holy One, blessed be He. Come and see. A boy [98*a*] who has reached the age of thirteen becomes a son of the Community of Israel and remains so until he is twenty. When he is twenty, if he be worthy he becomes a son of the Holy One, one of those of whom it is written, "Sons are ye to the Lord your God" (Deut. XIV, 1). Thus, when David had reached his thirteenth year it was said concerning him: "The Lord said unto me, My son art thou, to-day have I begotten thee" (Ps. II, 7). What does this mean ? It signifies that up till that time he was not in the state of sonship, and the supernal soul did not rest upon him, because he was in the years of immaturity (*'orlah*). But as soon as he reached the age when he became, being worthy, a son of the Community of Israel, he was, as it were, begotten anew: "To-day have I begotten thee"—I and not the "other side" as hitherto: I alone. And when Solomon was twenty, what do we read concerning him ? "I was a son of my father" (Prov. IV, 3), "father" referring to the Heavenly Father. Thus the words, "And if he have betrothed her unto his son" (in their mystical sense) refer to the time after the age of thirteen when a man emerges from the sphere of impurity to which he had been assigned. Then "he shall act towards her according to the rights of daughters". What is this ? We have been taught that every day the Holy One, blessed be He, gazed steadfastly down from the celestial heights upon the young boy who is still held in the power of the unclean spirit (*'orlah*), noting how he gradually liberates himself therefrom: first by attending school, where he begins to weaken it, and then by going to the synagogue, where he masters it still further. What does the Holy One then do to the soul of such a one ? He brings her into His Treasure-house, and bestows upon her rich, glorious and supernal gifts, and adorns her with noble ornaments until the time when the boy is thirteen years and

upward, when He brings her under the bridal canopy. "And if he take him another". . . . What do these words signify ? Ah, they indeed contain a mystery of mysteries, such as is entrusted only to the wisest of the wise ! One thing must be mentioned as a preliminary. On the Sabbath day, when the day is being sanctified, myriads of new souls emerge from the Tree of Life, and these are breathed into the denizens of earth and enter into them and remain in them during the whole of the Sabbath, and at the close of the Sabbath all these souls ascend once more to the regions of light, there to crown themselves with holy crowns of supernal brightness and splendour. And as at man's birth the Holy One provides him with a soul, so also does He provide him with this "other" soul specially for the Sabbath: at the same time not "diminishing" the food, raiment, etc., from his week-day soul.'

Having arrived at this point in his exposition, the old man wept again and then exclaimed, addressing himself: 'Old man, old man ! How long, how toilsomely hast thou laboured after the words of wisdom, that thou mightest grasp these holy mysteries; and now thou pourest them all out in a moment ! And yet how was it possible for thee to hoard these words and not express them, seeing that the Scripture tells us, "Withhold not good from the owners thereof, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it" (Prov. III, 27) ? Verily, wherever the truths of the Torah are expounded, the Holy One and the Community of Israel (the Shekinah) are present, "the owners" of the "good" side of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, who crown themselves with all the words of goodness and blessing which they hear spoken on earth. Old man, old man ! Art thou, then, uncertain whether the Holy One and the Shekinah are present here, and whether those to whom thou speakest are worthy to hear these mysteries ? Fear not ! Hast thou not plunged unafraid into the midst of mighty battles, and art now afeared ? Nay, nay, be not so: rather say what thou hast to say to the very end, since the Holy One and the Community of Israel are indeed here, for were it not so thou wouldst not have met with these men, nor even begun thy present discourse. So speak on, old man, speak on and have no fear !'

He then commenced with the text: "O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with majesty and beauty; who coverest thyself with light as with a garment; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain; who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters; who maketh the clouds his chariots; who walketh upon the wings of the wind; who maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flaming fire" (Ps. CIV, 1–3). 'The words "O Lord my God",' he said, 'signify the primary hypostasis (lit. beginning of faith), the emergence of the Thought[1] and the Future world,[2] an absolute unity without division. "Thou art great" refers to the beginning of actual creation, the first of the six primordial Days, the Right Side. The "very" symbolizes the Left Side. "Thou art clothed with majesty and beauty" signifies the two branches of the willows,[3] of which more anon. When the Psalmist came to the Tree of Life[4] it hid itself and would not enter the series on account of that "very", to wit the "Left Side" of all the lower branches, including a certain bitter branch.[5] On account of this the Tree of Life hid itself and was loth to be included in the sum of these things until the Psalmist returned to the subject and declared God's praise in another fashion, saying: "Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment"—to wit, with the light [98b] of the first day, and then, "Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain", thus including the Left Side in the Right, so as to shine under the rubric of "heaven", while the "very" was discarded. Then the verse proceeds: "Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters": here we have the emergence in joy of the Tree of Life, the "River going out of Eden", with the two willow shoots, referred to in the words "upper chambers", rooted in its waters, so that it became "as a tree planted by the waters, that spreadeth out her roots by the river" (Jer. XVII, 8). This is also the allusion contained in the words: "The river, the channels thereof shall make glad the city of God" (Ps. XLVI, 8). What are these channels? They are the roots of the willows, which here are called "upper chambers". These and the roots and the channels—all are rooted in those waters of that mysterious river. "The clouds

[1] *Hokmah.* [2] *Binah.* [3] *Nezah* and *Hod.* [4] *Tifereth.* [5] Samael.

his chariots" in the next verse refers to Michael and Gabriel; "Who walketh upon the wings of the wind" to Raphael, who comes to give healing to the world. From that point on "he maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flaming fire." Old man, old man! As thou art aware of all these things, fear not, but speak out boldly, and let the words of thy mouth spread light!'

The two friends rejoiced and listened in ecstasy and delight to the holy words. Said the old man: 'O ancient, O ancient, upon what a task hast thou entered! Thou hast plunged into the great sea, and now perforce must swim on till thou shalt have gained the farther shore! On, then! "And if he take him another. . . ." How many ancient mysteries never revealed before, regarding transmigration are indicated here! All the matters of which I am about to speak are perfect truth not deviating by one hair's-breadth from the path of truth. Now, in the first place I must remark that the souls of proselytes fly forth from Paradise in a very recondite manner. When the souls which proselytes have obtained from Paradise pass away from this world, to where do they return? According to the traditional law, he who first seizes the possessions of a proselyte at the time of the latter's death becomes their rightful owner. In the same way, all the holy supernal souls which the Holy One has appointed for those that are below go out at certain times and seasons from their bodily owners and ascend to their first home in order to enjoy the delights of Paradise. There they encounter the souls of proselytes, and whichever of them seizes on one claims it as its own. Each soul then clothes herself with that proselyte soul which she has claimed, and stands thus in Paradise, for there the souls must all be clothed. Not that they thereby forfeit any of the bliss which they enjoyed before, since it says "if he take unto him another, her food, etc." Still, when they ascend into the higher Paradise they remove these garments and are clothed only in their own radiance, for there no garb is worn.' Then the old man wept again as he had done before, and said to himself: 'Old man, old man, thou hast indeed reason to weep and to shed tears over every word; but the Holy One and His Holy Shekinah

well know that what I say is said with all sincerity and devoutness, because they are the real source of every word uttered by me, and are crowned by it. All the holy souls which come down to this world to take up each its appropriate place in a human body array themselves with the souls of proselytes which they have appropriated, as we have explained; and they enter into the bodies of the holy seed of Israel wearing this garment to be served therewith in this world. When these garments draw to themselves the good things of this world these holy souls regale themselves with the aroma which they gather from the garments. Now, there is no work of the Holy One so recondite but he has recorded it in the Torah; and the Torah reveals it for an instant and then straightway clothes it with another garment, so that it is hidden there and does not show itself. But the wise, whose wisdom makes them full of eyes, pierce through the garment to the very essence of the word that is hidden thereby. And when the word is momentarily revealed in that first instant of which we have spoken, those whose eyes are wise can see it, though it is so soon hidden again. In how many places does the Holy One insist that the holy seed should deal tenderly with the stranger, the proselyte ! In the course of such passages a secret emerges from its sheath, [99a] and as soon as it has been revealed returns thereto and once more conceals itself therein. That is to say, after repeating many times its injunctions concerning the treatment of the proselyte, the Scripture suddenly lays bare its hidden meaning by declaring: "For ye know the *soul* of the stranger" (i.e. proselyte, Ex. XXIII, 9). After this, however, the word retires again into its sheath, covers itself up, and hides itself again by adding: "For ye were strangers in the land of Egypt", imagining that because it covered itself up immediately, no one noticed it, to wit, this "soul" of the proselyte.' Then the old man expounded in connection with the subject of the soul and her garment the words: "And Moses went into the midst of the cloud and got him up into the mount" (Ex. XXIV, 18). 'Now what does the cloud signify?' he asked, and answered his own question, saying: 'There is a reference here to the words: "I set my bow in the cloud":

namely, the rainbow, in reference to which we have learnt that it removed, as it were, its outer garment and gave it to Moses, who went up to the mountain with it and saw through it all the sights with which he was feasted there.'

When the ancient one had reached this point he paused, and the two rabbis prostrated themselves before him, wept and said: 'Had we come into this world only in order to hear these thy words from thy mouth it were sufficient.' Said he: 'Associates, I did not begin to speak to you merely in order to tell you what I have told up till now, for, surely, an old man like myself would not limit himself to one saying, making a noise like a single coin in a jug. How many human beings live in confusion of mind, beholding not the way of truth whose dwelling is in the Torah, the Torah which calls them day by day to herself in love, but alas, they do not even turn their heads ! It is indeed as I have said, that the Torah lets out a word, and emerges for a little from her sheath, and then hides herself again. But she does this only for those who understand and obey her. She is like unto a beautiful and stately damsel, who is hidden in a secluded chamber of a palace and who has a lover of whom no one knows but she. Out of his love for her he constantly passes by her gate, turning his eyes towards all sides to find her. She, knowing that he is always haunting the palace, what does she do ? She opens a little door in her hidden palace, discloses for a moment her face to her lover, then swiftly hides it again. None but he notices it; but his heart and soul, and all that is in him are drawn to her, knowing as he does that she has revealed herself to him for a moment because she loves him. It is the same with the Torah, which reveals her hidden secrets only to those who love her. She knows that he who is wise of heart daily haunts the gates of her house. What does she do ? She shows her face to him from her palace, making a sign of love to him, and straightway returns to her hiding place again. No one understands her message save he alone, and he is drawn to her with heart and soul and all his being. Thus the Torah reveals herself momentarily in love to her lovers in order to awaken fresh love in them. Now this is the way of the Torah. At first, when she begins to reveal herself

to a man, she makes signs to him. Should he understand, well and good, but if not, then she sends for him and calls him "simpleton", saying to her messengers: "Tell that simpleton to come here and converse with me", as it is written: "Whoso is a simpleton let him turn in hither" (Prov. IX, 4). When he comes to her she begins to speak to him, first from behind the curtain which she has spread for him about her words suitable to his mode of understanding, so that he may progress little by little. This is called "*Derasha*" (Talmudic casuistry, namely the derivation of the traditional laws and usages from the letter of Scripture). Then she speaks to him from behind a thin veil of a finger mesh, discoursing riddles and parables—which go by the name of Haggadah. When at last he is familiar with her she shows herself to him face to face and converses with him concerning all her hidden mysteries and all the mysterious ways which have been secreted in her heart from time immemorial. Then such a man is [99*b*] a true adept in the Torah, a "master of the house", since she has revealed to him all her mysteries, withholding and hiding nothing. She says to him: "Seest thou the sign, the hint, which I gave thee at first, how many mysteries it contains?" He realizes then that nothing may be added to nor taken from the words of the Torah, not even one sign or letter. Therefore men should follow the Torah with might and main in order that they may become her lovers, as has been described.

' "And if he take him another. . . ." How many, and how wondrous, are the cycles of the soul as indicated in these words! Truly, all souls must undergo transmigration; but men do not perceive the ways of the Holy One, how the revolving scale is set up and men are judged every day at all times, and how they are brought before the Tribunal, both before they enter into this world and after they leave it. They perceive not the many transmigrations and the many mysterious works which the Holy One accomplishes with many naked souls, and how many naked spirits roam about in the other world without being able to enter within the veil of the King's Palace. Many are the worlds through which they revolve, and each revolution is wondrous in many

hidden ways, but men neither know nor perceive these things! Nor do they know how the souls roll about "like a stone inside a sling" (1 Sam. XXV, 29). Now, as we have begun to disclose these mysteries, it is opportune to reveal that all souls (*neshamah*) emanate from a high and mighty Tree, from that "River which goes out of Eden" (Gen. II, 10), and all spirits (*ruaḥ*) from another, smaller Tree—the souls from above and the spirits from below—and they unite after the fashion of male and female. And when they (soul and spirit) unite, they shine with a celestial light, and in their union they are designated "Lamp", as it says, "The lamp of the Lord is the soul of man" (Prov. XX, 27), *NeR* (lamp) being the abbreviation of *Neshamah-Ruaḥ* (soul-spirit). Soul and spirit, the union of the masculine and the feminine, bring forth light, but if separate they do not give light. The soul wraps herself in the spirit in order to occupy her station in the upper region, in the hidden Palace, as it is written: "For the spirit becomes a covering (*ya'toph*) before me and the souls which I have made" (Isa. LVII, 16). There above, in the Garden, in the Palace, the soul wraps herself in the spirit in manner due. And when the soul descends to the lower Paradise she wraps herself in another (lower) spirit (the soul of the proselyte), concerning which we have spoken above—a spirit which emanates from that lower Paradise and has his abode there. And the soul clothes herself in this world with all these various spirits, and so abides here. Now the spirit which has left this world without procreation and engendering of children undergoes constant transmigration, finding no rest, and rolling about "like a stone inside a sling" until a "redeemer"[1] comes forward to redeem it and bring it back to the same "vessel" which it formerly used and to which it clave with heart and soul, as to its life's partner, in the union of spirit with spirit. This "redeemer" builds up that spirit again. For the spirit which was left by the deceased still clinging to that vessel has not been lost—since nothing is lost in the world—but it is still there and seeks to return to its basis; and so the "redeemer" brings it and builds it up again in its place, and it becomes a new creation, a new spirit in a

[1] The *levir*, or husband's brother. v. Deut. XXV, 8, 9.

new body. It may be said, "the spirit becomes the same as what it was": this is so, but it has not been built up save for the sake of the other spirit which was left in that vessel. [100a] There is here a profound mystery. According to the Book of Enoch, this "building" is indeed constructed by the other spirit which was left in the "vessel", and which draws after him the spirit which roams about in the air naked and alone; and these two spirits are welded together, and if the person is worthy to be built up again, the two spirits become one indeed, an organ in which a superior soul may wrap herself. For just as other men have a spirit which is seized by the over-soul and another higher spirit, and the holy over-soul is clothed with both, so here there are two spirits for the superior soul to wrap herself therewith, and for them another body (the child which is to be borne by the widow who married the near of kin), which is now built anew.

'Now the question arises, what becomes of the body of the man who died without issue? Is it lost because he was not worthy to bring forth a descendant? In that case it was in vain that he endeavoured to keep the commandments of the Torah: and even if he kept only *one* commandment, we know that "even the emptiest in Israel are full of good deeds as a pomegranate is full of grains".[1] This body, although it was not found worthy to bring forth an issue, was yet able to fulfil other commandments, and should it all have been in vain? Friends friends! Open your eyes wide that ye may see more clearly, for I know that at present ye imagine that such bodies are mere figures in the void, incapable of sustained existence. It is, however, not so, and ye must beware of such thoughts. "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can show forth all his praise?" (Ps. CVI, 2). The body of the first husband is not lost: on the contrary, it will have an existence in the time to come, for it has already suffered a sufficiency of punishment, and the Holy One never curtails the reward of any creature which He has created, except of those who have entirely left the faith and in whom was no good whatsoever, and those who have not bowed down at

[1] c. T. B. Chagigah, *sub fin.*

the *Modim*[1] prayer, who are turned by the Holy One into other creatures, because that body will never again be built into the form of a man, and will not rise for ever. Not so these, however. What, then, does the Holy One do, if that spirit was worthy to be perfected in this world in the body of the other one? Observe now. The "redeemer" brings in his spirit, which mixes with the spirit already in the "vessel", with the result that there are three spirits there: one that was left there (by the deceased husband); one that is now naked but is drawn back there as to its basis (the spirit of the deceased husband); and one that the "redeemer" now brings in. This would seem to be impossible. But behold the mighty works of the Lord! The spirit which the "redeemer" brought in becomes the garment of the deceased's soul, taking the place of the proselyte's soul, and the naked spirit who has returned there to be built up becomes the covering for the supernal holy soul of the deceased. And the spirit which was left (by the deceased) cleaving to the "vessel" flies away from there, and the Holy One prepares for it a place in the mysterious region of the opening of the rock which is behind the walls of Paradise. There it is stored up and it enters eventually into the former body, together with which it will rise on the Resurrection. This is what I meant when I spoke of two that are one (or one that is two). That body, however, undergoes great punishment before the Resurrection, for, because it was not worthy to bring forth an issue, it was put into the earth in the region which adjoins *Arqa*.[2] There it lies for a while, then it is removed to this world, then back again: it has no rest, except on Sabbaths, festivals, and new moons. [100b] It is concerning such bodies that it is written: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. XII, 2); the latter are those who have not done their duty (by bearing children) in this world. There are the mighty works of the Supernal Holy King, who does not permit anything to perish, not even the breath of the

[1] Lit. "We give thanks": the opening word of one of the Eighteen Benedictions. Cf. T. B. Baba Kama, 16a.

[2] c. Zohar, Genesis 39b, 40a.

mouth. He has a place for everything, and makes of it what He wills. Even a human word, yes, even the voice, is not void, but has its place and destination in the universe. This body which is built up again and emerges into the world as a new creation has no mate, and therefore the usual proclamation ("the daughter of so-and-so to so-and-so")[1] is not made about him from above. For his mate has been lost to him, the one whom he should have had becoming his mother, and his brother becoming his father (i.e. it is the brother of the deceased who died without issue, and his wife, to whom it is due that his body should be "built up" again).'

The old man now addressed himself again, saying: 'Old man, old man, what hast thou done? O, if thou hadst only been silent! Verily, thou hast launched thyself upon the great sea without rudder and without sail! What wilt thou do now? Wouldst thou fain ascend? Thou canst not. Descend? It is impossible: the deep abyss will swallow thee up. What wilt thou do? O, old man, old man! Thou canst not turn back. Yet let not thy spirit or thy strength fail thee, for thou knowest that no other man in thy generation has ventured to sail in a little boat on the wide ocean as thou art doing. The son of Yoḥai knows how to guard his way, and even when he does enter into the deep dangerous waters of the high seas he first looks round him to see whether he will be able to cross; but thou, old man, didst not so. Now, old man, as thou art arrived at this pass, do not weaken in thy efforts, do not give up! Sail to the right and to the left, to the length and to the breadth, down into the depth, and up into the heights! Do not be afraid! Old man, old man, have courage! How many giants hast thou battled with, and how many battles hast thou won!' He wept, and then began again.

'It is written: "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon in the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart" (S.S. III, 11). This verse has already been properly interpreted, and yet we may still ask, How is one to understand the words, "Go forth and behold King Solomon"? This title, we know, refers to the King of Peace,[2]

[1] *v.* T. B. Sotah, 2*a*. [2] *v.* Zohar, Genesis, 29*a*.

and who can behold Him who is high above the heavenly hosts in a region which "no eye hath seen apart from thee, O God" (Isa. LXIV, 3)? Him of whose glory the angels above ask: "Where is the place of His glory?" Observe, however, that the text does not say "*and* the crown", but "*in* the crown", from which we learn that he who sees the Crown beholds also the loveliness of the King of Peace. Then again, "wherewith his mother crowned him": She (the Shekinah) is sometimes called "Daughter", and sometimes "Sister", and here She is called "Mother". And She is indeed all these. He who penetrates into this mystery has imbibed precious wisdom. Now what shall I do? Should I explain? But such a veiled mystery ought not to be disclosed. Yet should I not explain, these good men will be orphaned of this mystery.'

The old man fell on his face and said: '"Into thine hand I deliver my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth" (Ps. XXXI, 7). The vessel which was below, how can it be above? The husband who was above, how can he be below? His spouse become his mother! Wonder upon wonder! His brother become his father! If his real father were to redeem him that would be understood. But that his brother should become his father, is this not a wonder? This would indeed be topsy-turvydom: those that should be above are now below, and they that should be below are now above! However, "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his. And he changeth the times and the seasons. . . . He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him" (Dan. II, 20–21). He who is in the light cannot see the darkness; but not so the Holy One, blessed be He; [101*a*] although the light dwelleth with Him, He knows what is in the darkness. Out of the light He beholds the darkness and knows all that is there. The mystery of the soul and her revolutions is analogous to the mystery of the Divine Hypostases.[1] When a man reaches the age of thirteen he stands, as we have said, in the grade of sonship. When he is twenty, he reaches a higher grade, the grade of

[1] i.e. in virtue of the fact that the Shekinah can be called sometimes "Daughter" and sometimes "Mother".

"Joseph": the realm of Masculinity, the sphere of Understanding. Now, at first, the man when he married the woman, was lord over the world of Femininity, over the "small tree" —for the Feminine is in the image of the Small Tree. But when he failed to have children with his wife, and died without leaving an issue, he was excluded from the world of Masculinity, and she, by marrying his brother, became, as it were, his mother (by bringing forth a successor to her deceased husband); and his brother, "the redeemer", becomes, as it were, his father and enters into the realm of Masculinity which was formerly his. Thus the Tree is turned upside down: what was above is now below, and what was below is now above. Oh, if only people knew the pain which the body of the men who died without children must undergo! There is no pain like unto the pain of the body that is in a state of frustration, when it has been uprooted from the sphere of Masculinity and transferred into that of Femininity. Concerning this, it is written: "If the priest's daughter (i.e. the soul) be a widow or divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's meat, but there shall no stranger eat thereof" (Lev. XXII, 13). We have already pointed out what "the priest's daughter" signifies. If she be a "widow" of the first body, "divorced" in not being able to penetrate into the courtyard of the King —for those who are not in the sphere of the Masculine realm have no part therein—"having no child", for if she had, she would not have sunk into the Feminine sphere, "and is returned unto her father's house", that is to say, unto the realm of Femininity (as that realm is called) where she previously was, then, if she be worthy, "she shall eat of her father's meat" [101*b*] namely, participate in the joys of the Feminine realm, the supernal food coming down from above; but she is still a "stranger", not able to participate in the contemplative joy of the other righteous; she may not eat of "the holy things" (*Ibid.* v. 10), but may eat the *Terumah* (the meat of the heave-offering), because this symbolizes the Feminine sphere, and therefore she may eat only at night (v. 7). Whereas holy food which belongs to the world of Masculinity may be eaten only during the day. Therefore

"Israel is holiness unto the Lord, the firstfruits (the beginning) of his increase" (Jer. II, 3): the supernal beginning of the whole sphere of the Masculine is holy, and its further development in holiness is Israel. When spirits come to visit the graves, as they do at certain seasons, they do not visit the graves of these men, since they have not merited to rise to that region called "holiness", being only "strangers". Moreover, if that spirit did not succeed in doing its duty (by begetting children) in the period of transmigration, he may not even eat the *Terumah*, and is called "stranger" even in the lower world.

'So far concerning this mystery. Old man, old man! As thou hast started to sail on the wide sea, go on boldly in all directions and breast its waves! I have now to reveal something more. I said that the "redeemer", when he enters into the "vessel", lets his spirit cleave to that "vessel", so that nothing is lost, not even the breath of the mouth. This is quite correct. Old man, old man! If thou art to reveal mysteries, speak out without fear! What of other men, normal persons, who did procreate and then passed away from this world? We have said that the spirit of a man (the *absconditus sponsus*) is left in the woman who was his wife. Well, what becomes of it? Supposing she marries again, is it possible that two different spirits of two men should dwell together in one body? For there is no question of a "redeemer" in this case, as the first husband *did* have children. Is that spirit then entirely lost? Nay, this cannot be. The same problem arises even when the widow does not marry again. What becomes of her husband's spirit which cleaves to her? All this must now be explained. Old man, old man! See what thou hast done and what thou hast taken upon thyself! Arise, old man, and unfurl thy sail! Arise, old man, and humble thyself before thy Master!' He then continued: ' "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself (walk) in great matters, or in things too high for me" (Ps. CXXXI, 1). King David said this: he was a great king, supreme over all kings and rulers from east to west, and yet it never entered his mind to turn from the right path, for he was ever humble before the Lord.

When he studied the Torah he summoned up all his strength like a lion, and his eyes looked down at the same time to the earth, out of awe to his Lord, and when he went about among the people he displayed no haughtiness. Hence he said "my heart is not haughty, although I am a mighty king, nor mine eyes lofty, when I stand before Thee studying the Torah, and I do not walk in greatness or haughtiness when I go among the people." Now if David was thus humble, how much more must ordinary people be so! And I, how lowly and with what downcast eyes must I stand before the Holy King! Far be it from me to be puffed up when I deal with holy words of the Torah.' He wept and his tears trickled on to his beard. Said he: 'Old man, old man, feeble in strength, how fair are the tears on thy cheeks, like "the precious ointment that ran down upon the face of the good old man Aaron" (Ps. CXXXIII, 2). Say thy words, old man, [102a] for the Holy King is here!

'What, then, becomes of the spirit of an ordinary man whose widow has married again? Come ye and see the wonderful and mighty works of the Holy King! Who can utter them? When the second husband's spirit enters into the body of the woman the spirit of the first husband contends with it, and they cannot dwell in peace together, so that the woman is never altogether happy with the second husband, because the spirit of the first one is always pricking her, his memory is always with her, causing her to weep and sigh over him. In fact, his spirit writhes within her like a serpent. And so it goes on for a long time. If the second spirit prevails over the first one, then the latter goes out. But if, as sometimes happens, the first conquers the second, it means the death of the second husband. Therefore we are taught that after a woman has been twice widowed no one should marry her again, for the angel of death has taken possession of her, though most people do not know this. Friends, I am aware that on this point you may well object that in that case the second husband's death was not in accordance with Divine judgement. It is not so, however. It is all decided by fair trial, whether the one spirit should prevail over the other or be at peace with it; but he who marries a widow is like unto one who ventures to

brave the ocean during a storm without a rudder and without sails, and knows not whether he will cross safely or sink into the depths.

'Now I have said that when the second spirit prevails over the first, the latter deserts the body. But whither goeth it? What becomes of it? Old man, old man, what hast thou done? Thou didst intend to speak but little, and hast come as far as this! Thou hast entered a place into which no other human being has hitherto entered since the time of Doeg and Aḥitophel, when four hundred questions were asked concerning a tower which was suspended in the air, and which no one could answer until Solomon came and made everything clear.[1] Old man, old man! Thou hast commenced to reveal a profound secret. What hast thou done? Old man, old man! thou shouldst indeed have considered beforehand and been careful of thy steps. Now there is no time to hide. Old man, take fresh courage! The spirit that has left the body of the woman, where has it fled?' He wept again and said: 'Friends, the tears which I shed fall not on your account but for fear of the Lord of the universe, that perchance I have revealed mysteries without permission. It is, however, known to the Holy One, blessed be He, that all I do, I am doing not for my own honour nor for the honour of my father, but because my sole desire is to serve Him. I discern the glory and honour of one of you in the other world; and as to the other one, I know that he is likewise worthy; at first this was not revealed to me, but now I see it clearly. Now where does the first spirit, having been thrust out by the second, go? It roams about in the world for some time, and then visits the grave of the man to whom it belongs, and then it flits about again in the world and reveals itself to men in their dreams, so that they behold in fancy the face of the deceased, who tells them various things after the manner of the original spirit from which this spirit is derived. For as the other spirit is roaming about the other world, so this one roams about this world, making communications to people, and it always visits that grave at the time when the spirits of the dead visit the graves of their bodies. Then the two spirits join one another, the

[1] v. T. B. Sanhedrin, 106b.

one (the essential) using the other as its garment, and they ascend again. When the essential spirit reaches its place, it puts off its "garment", namely the second spirit, which latter is given a place either [102b] within or without the palaces of Paradise, according to merit, there remaining hidden. And when the spirits visit this world and the dead attach themselves to the living they do it only through drawing down the essential spirit, which then wears the other as a garment. And should ye ask, "In that case the essential spirit of the first husband profits thereby, and the woman therefore has done him a favour in marrying again?" I would say it is not so, for had she not married again, and the spirit of the first husband not so been thrust out by that of the second, he would have profited in a different way: his spirit would not have had to roam about in the world and pay visits to the living. Should the question arise, "In that case her remarriage was her own decision and did not depend on a decree from above; why, then, didst thou say that it was providential and that one man should, as it were, be thrust out by the other and explain that the woman was indeed the preordained mate for the second husband and not for the first?" I would answer: "Indeed it is as I said: The spirit of the first husband is ejected by that of the second, just because it is the latter who was really intended from the first to be her consort, and not the first, and, conversely, if the second husband's spirit is pushed out by that of the first one, it shows that the first one was destined to be her only mate. Hence, he who marries a widow "knows not that it is with the peril of his life" (Prov. VII, 28), for he knows not whether she is predestined to be his real spouse. However, if the widow does not wish to marry again, even when the man who wishes to marry her is meant to be her ideal mate, the Holy One does not condemn her for that, and He prepares another wife for the man whom she had refused, and she is not brought before the heavenly tribunal for her refusal, even when she has no children, because the commandment concerning procreation is not obligatory for women.

'Now what happens to the spirit of a deceased husband whose widow does not marry again? It dwells in her for the

first twelve months, visiting his soul (*nephesh*) every night at the grave, in depression and sadness, and after the twelve months it leaves her and stands before the gates of Paradise, but occasionally visits this world, namely the "vessel" from whence it went out. And when the woman dies that spirit goes out to meet her, and clothes itself in her spirit, and so she comes into contact with her husband; and husband and wife shine together in the closest union.

'As we have come so far, we must now disclose the hidden paths of the Lord of the universe, which the children of men know not, though they are all within the way of truth, as it is written: "For the ways of the Lord are upright; the righteous shall walk in them, and the transgressors shall stumble therein" (Hos. XI, 10). The children of men neither know nor perceive how exalted are the deeds of the Holy One and how strange, yet withal according to the way of truth, turning neither to the right nor to the left. Those who undergo transmigration and are driven out from the other world (because they refused to propagate themselves) without feminine partners, how do they manage to find wives in this world, seeing that no female partner is preordained for them, as for other men? See how wondrous and exalted are the mighty works of God! We have been taught that over him who divorces his first wife the altar sheds tears. Why the altar? Because, as I have said on another occasion all women stand in the image and form of the altar,[1] for which reason they "inherit" the seven benedictions (used at the marriage sacrament), because they all have the "Community of Israel" (the Shekinah) as their prototype. Thus, when [103a] a man divorces his wife he causes, as it were, a defect in the stone of the heavenly altar. Thus it is possible for the divorcements to unite themselves one with the other (i.e. the divorcement of the man's spirit in heaven and of the woman on earth). Concerning this mystery it says: "And hath written to her a bill of divorcement, and gave it in her hand, and sent her out of his house, and she departed from his house, and went and became another man's wife (Deut. XXIV, 1). What is the significance of "another"? It points to the words, "and they

[1] Because it symbolizes *Malkuth*, the sphere of feminine souls.

shall shoot forth from another place" (Job VIII, 19), i.e. from the region of impurity. Thus the divorcements unite as one, the divorcement of this world and the divorcement of the other world. For this woman who stood formerly in the likeness of the supernal form has now became attached to the low form. He is called "another" (*aḥer*), and he is called "latter", "last one" (*aḥron*), as it says, "and if the last husband hate her" (Deut. XXIV, 3); "if the last husband die" (*Ibid.*). Now, why is the second husband of the divorced woman called "last" and not "second"? It is as we have said, that it has a higher significance, he being "another" and also the "last". Now the stone rolls in the basket (i.e. there is a difficulty). First, why is he called "another" when the whole building (of the conjugal relationship with the first husband) has been destroyed and turned into dust? And then, why is he called "the last"? If he is the right person, well and good, but if not, there will be another development (and he will not be the last). But mark this. It is written: "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. I, 31), and "good" here has been interpreted to refer to the angel of good, and "very" to the angel of death.[1] Now the Holy One has prepared a remedy for all ills. It is written: "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden" (Gen. II, 10). This "river" never ceases to procreate and to spread itself and to bring forth fruit. But the "other god" (the principle of evil) is emasculated and has no desire to procreate, and does not multiply or bear fruit, for were he to bear fruit, he would reduce the whole world to chaos. Therefore man who causes the "other side" to multiply (by consciously rejecting the commandment of procreation) is called "an evil one", and will nevermore behold the race of the Shekinah, for it is written: "Evil dwelleth not with thee" (Ps. V. 5). A man who undergoes the metamorphosis of the soul, if he sins and joins the "other god" who produces no fruit and engenders no children, is therefore called "other"; the second husband who does likewise is called "the last one" by the Holy One, and not merely "the second", in order to avert an omen pointing to the destruction of the

[1] v. Midrash Rabba, *in loco*.

second building also. The Scripture itself teaches us this lesson, since it calls the second Temple "last" (Haggai II, 9), in order to avoid the omen. Therefore "the former husband who sent her away cannot take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled" (Deut. XXIV, 4). It does not say "he *should* not", but "he *cannot*", because, as the woman has united herself with another man and been subjected to a lower grade, the Holy One is unwilling that the former husband should lower himself by uniting with a grade that is not his. And mark this. If that woman, having been divorced, did not marry again, even if she should have misconducted herself with many men, the husband, if he wishes, may take her back, but not when she has been legally married to another man. Once she has united herself with a lower grade, the first husband, [103b] who belongs to the grade of "good", may not associate himself with her any longer nor spread on that side. Other men may marry her, as perhaps she may find a proper mate again. A man who has children by his first wife, and brings such a woman into his house, unites himself with a flaming sword, in two ways: first, because two have already entered and been violently ejected, and now he is the third; and, secondly, how can he let his spirit enter into a vessel which has already been used by others, associate himself with her and cleave to her? It is not that he is prohibited to do so, but in doing it he chooses a bad companion to himself. R. Levitas, from Kephar Oni, used to jeer and scoff at a person who married a woman of this sort, applying to her the words: "And she shall laugh at the last day" (Prov. XXXI, 25), meaning, the "last one" who unites himself with such a woman will be a laughing stock.

'Now we have to turn our attention to a great and noble spot which once was on the earth, being a very root and stock of truth, to wit, Obed the father of Jesse, the grandfather of David. It has been affirmed that he was such a "last one": how, then, could the root of truth (David) emanate from such a place? The fact, however, is that Obed worked and laboured at the root of the tree, until it was regenerated and made wholesome: it was therefore that he was called Obed (labourer, also "worshipper"), a name which no other man

merited to bear. He came, he digged, he hoed round the root of the tree, he pressed out the bitterness from the branches and made wholesome the crown. Then came Jesse, his son, who further improved and invigorated it, and grafted it on to the branches of another stately tree, joining tree with tree so that they were intertwined. And when David came he found the branches entwined and knit together, and was thus enabled to attain dominion over the world. And all these things which came to pass had their cause and beginning in Obed.'

Having spoken thus, the old man wept again and said: 'Old man, old man, did I not say that thou hadst plunged into the midst of the great sea ? Now thou art indeed in the very midst of the mighty waves ! Old man, old man, thou hast none to blame but thyself; hadst thou remained silent at the beginning all would have been well with thee, but now thou mayest not, and there is none to take hold of thine hand ! Thou art alone. But arise, old man, and take courage ! Obed remedied himself because he came out from the evil field in which were bad cisterns. Then came Jesse, his son, who improved and hoed round that tree and digged up that which was evil and that which was bitter likewise. This is a mystery of mysteries, and I know not with certainty whether or no to reveal it. Yet say on, old man ! Yea, I shall certainly speak, if only in order that these two who shall hear me should be made fully cognizant of the other transmigrations of the souls of men. Now, Obed, as I have said, hoed round the root of the tree, so improving it somewhat; and yet, when King David came, he was left only with the lower, feminine tree, and had to receive life from another tree. Now, if he for whom the way was so well prepared had to develop thus, how much more so ordinary persons who undergo transmigration ! Thus, then, it was with Perez, and with Boaz likewise. Obed was also thus. With regard to all of these, the tree emerged from the side of evil and was afterwards joined to the side of good, as we read that "Er, the firstborn of Judah, was wicked in the sight of the Lord" (XXXVIII, 7); so was Onan (*Ibid.* 9, 10); so also was Mahlon, although his evil was not so great. Thus, in all these there was a tincture of ill, from which, however, good eventually emerged; as it is written of

David, their descendant: "goodly to look to", "and the Lord was with him" (1 Sam. XVI, 12, 18). Thus the tree below was purified and remained so, so that "God ruled over the nations" (through the house of David).

'The grades of Israel took root in the supernal foundation from the beginning: Reuben, Simeon, Levi. But when it comes to Judah it says that Leah, his mother, said: "This time I will praise the lord . . . and she left off bearing" (Gen. XXIX, 35); concerning which it is written: "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear" (Isa. LIV, 1). For when Judah was born the Feminine was united with the Masculine. . . . [104b]

'All the twelve tribes represent on earth their celestial prototypes, and because they were in reality "sons" in this world, the Shekinah [105a] was perfected in them in these twelve "lineaments" (boundaries) of Israel, which are called "*Eleh*" (these), as it says, "These (*eleh*) all are the tribes of Israel" (Gen. XLIX, 28), this word, in conjunction with *Mi* (Who ?) forming the name Elohim,[1] and so bringing the building to completion. On this account did the celestial representative of Esau say to Jacob: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for thou hast waged war with Elohim and with men and hast prevailed" (Gen. XXXII, 28), i.e. prevailed above, by means of the perfect and original structure, which is also indicated by the words "all these". Therefore Israel can never cease to be. If, God forbid, they should so cease to be, this Divine Name would be ended likewise, as it is written: "When they (the Canaanites) shall cut off our name from the earth, what wilt thou do unto thy great name ?" (Josh. VII, 9). The "great Name" is the first building, the first Name, Elohim. And now, when Israel is in exile, the whole building has fallen, as it were. But in the time to come, when the Holy One shall redeem His children from exile, the "*Mi*" and the "*Eleh*", which when they were in exile were separated, will be united as one, and the Name Elohim be perfectly established and the world shall be healed. Therefore it is written: "Who (*mi*) are these (*eleh*) that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows ?" (Isa. LX, 8): the one Name, without any separation, namely

[1] v. Zohar, Genesis 2a.

Elohim. For because of the exile the *Mi* ascended, as it were, and left the building, and consequently the building fell, and the Name that was perfect, namely the supernal great Name that was from the beginning, fell. Therefore we pray in the synagogues that this Name may be restored as it was: "May His great Name be magnified and sanctified": "May the great Name be blessed." What is that "great Name"? It is the one that was in the beginning, the first of all, without whom there can be no building. The "*Mi*" will never be built up without the "*Eleh*". Therefore at that time (the Messianic age) the "*Mi*" and the "*Eleh*" "shall fly as a cloud", and the whole world shall see that the supernal Name has been restored to its perfection; and when the Name has been restored and built up again, then shall Israel rule over all, and all the other Names will be restored; for all the Names depend on that great Name, the first of all buildings.

"This mystery may be further explained as follows. When the Holy One created the world, before any other thing was built this Name was built, as it is written: "Lift up your eyes on high and see: who hath created these? (*Mi barah eleh*)" (Isa. XL, 26). He created His Name in its perfection, and when He created "*Eleh*" He created it with all the hosts appertaining to it, as it is written: "Who bringeth out their host by number (*be-mispar*)" (*Ibid.*). What is the significance of "*be-mispar*"? The Holy One, blessed be He, has a son, whose glory shines from one end of the world to another. He is a great and mighty tree, whose head reaches heaven, and whose roots are set in the holy ground, and his name is "Mispar" and his place is in the uppermost heaven, and below that heaven are five firmaments, and all these firmaments take this name for his sake, as it is written, "The heavens proclaim (*mesaprim*) the glory of God" (Ps. XIX, 1). Were it not for this "Mispar" there would be neither hosts nor offspring in any of the worlds. Concerning this it is written: "Who can count the dust of Jacob and the number (*Mispar*) of the progeny of Israel?" (Num. XXXIII, 10). There are two indeed who did count these without the evil eye having any effect on them. The first "counted the dust of

Jacob", the strong rocks, the holy rocks, whence issue waters to the world, concerning which it is written: "And thy seed shall be like the dust of the earth" (Gen. XXVIII, 11, 14); as the world is blessed for the sake of the dust, so will "all the nations of the earth be blessed in thy seed" (*Ibid.* XXII, 18). And the second shall "number the progeny of Jacob", the females, the pearls of the couch whereon Israel lay. [105b] In the future (Messianic Age) "the flocks shall yet pass under one who counts" (Jer. XXXIII, 18). We know not who he shall be; but since at that time all will be in union without separation, there will be one "reckoner". Arise, old man,' he cried, 'awake, collect thy forces and breast the waves.' Then he continued: "Who can count the dust of Jacob and the number of the progeny of Israel?" When the Holy One shall arise to waken the dead, what will be the plight of those who went through transmigration several times and who have become two in one body, two fathers, two mothers, as we have seen? However, "Who (*Mi*) shall count the dust of Jacob?" The Lord will make all things straight and nothing will be lost. For so has been expounded the verse: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. XII, 2). "The dust of the earth" is a reference similar to that explained in the Book of Enoch, that the associates saw the letters of which these words are composed, and a voice was heard, saying: "Awaken and sing, ye who dwell in the dust" (Isa. XXVI, 19). The first edifice of the world (of the pre-resurrection period) will be as refuse in comparison with the second edifice (of the post-resurrection period), for this last will be perfected according to the Divine plan. Those that are worthy will awake to life in the world below, since they have not merited the world above; and those that are not worthy even of this will awaken to shame and everlasting contempt. As the "other side" will pass away from the world (there being no more evil principle or sin), the Holy One will leave these specimens of the past and evil world, who belonged to the stream which issued forth from that side, in order that all the children of the world may, in beholding them, be astonished. All this will be caused by those

who suffered their fount to fail and produced no fruit here, having no wish to maintain the Holy Covenant. It is they who cause all this and all the transmigrations of which I spake.'

The old man was silent for a moment, and the companions wondered, not knowing whether it was day or night, whether they stood on their heads or their feet. Then the old man began again with the verse: "If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve, and in the seventh he shall go out for nothing" (v. 2). 'This verse', said he, 'proves what I have said. Observe, now. Every male before being born is in prototype in the world of Masculinity, and every female in the world of Femininity. Now, so long as a man serves the Holy One, blessed be He, he remains attached to the six first years (i.e. to the six "masculine" emanations); but if he withdraw himself from His service (by neglecting the commandment of procreation), then the Lord separates him from the six years of the world of Masculinity and he is delivered into bondage unto a man[1] who does belong to the six sides, in order that he should serve him six years as a punishment for the supernal six years which he rejected. After that he descends lower and is attached to the world of Femininity: as he refused to take his rightful place in the Masculine world, let him now belong to that of the Female! The Female, the seventh year, comes and receives him, and from now on his part is in the world of Femininity. If he does not seek to fix himself therein, and refuses the redemption which it offers him (of making good his neglect), he descends still lower and joins the "other side". From now on he is finally severed both from the Masculine and the Feminine worlds, and is held fast by the "servants" of the "other side", and he has to be branded and stigmatized, for every stigma comes from the "other side". However, when the Jubilee year arrives, he is freed from that power and begins to undergo transmigration once more, and returns to the world as he was before and is attached to the world of Femininity, but not to a still higher grade. If he be then worthy, he will bring into existence children all of whom will belong to the world of Femininity,

[1] Metatron, v. page 282.

symbolically expressed in the words: "The virgins, her companions shall be brought unto thee" (Ps. XLV, 15); it will be a sign of merit, for that he has made good his defect. But should he not be found worthy to procreate even after the Jubilee, he is made as though he were not, having been mercifully returned to this world and yet refusing the opportunity of reparation which was offered to him: "If he came by himself (*be-gapo*), he shall go out by himself" (v. 8), meaning: "If he enters this world single, without [106a] offspring, not having previously desired the engendering of children, and even now leaving this world single, he departs even as a stone which is thrown from a sling, until it reaches the place which is called "the mighty rock", into which he enters. As soon as he is there, the breath of him who is the Single one (Samael), who had to be separated from his feminine counterpart (Lilith), and who walks after the manner of a serpent, breathes on him, and straightway he leaves that mighty rock and, wandering lonely forth, begins to roam the world until he shall find a "redeemer" through whose agency he can return to this earth. This is the significance of the words: "If he came by himself, he shall go out by himself"; the reference is to a man who refused to get married and beget children. But "if he get married" (*Ibid.*), that is to say, if he had a wife but was not blessed with children, he is not thus driven out alone, for the Holy One does not let any creature remain unrewarded. "His wife shall go out with him": husband and wife both undergo transmigration and unite again as they were before. Such a man does not marry a divorced woman, but the woman who was previously his wife but did not then bear him children, in order that now both may gain merit by making good their deficiency.

'The text continues: "If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's and he shall go out by himself.' Scripture now returns to the former subject, namely to the case of a man who "went out" without a wife (that is, who never married at all), implying that the grade called "the seventh year" should redeem him. This "Seventh" is called

"his master": the Master of the whole earth. And if this Master shall have pity on him and bring him back to this world by himself as he was, and give him a wife of the kind for whom the altar sheds tears (i.e. a woman divorced by a man whose first wife she was) and they unite, and she bears him sons and daughters, "the wife and her children shall be her master's", as has been explained. For, as he has made good his former omission, he is received by the Holy King, who restores him to the position intended for him. He is called a "repentant sinner", for he comes into the heritage of his original place in the ever-flowing celestial river.[1] There is no obstacle in the world that can stand in the way of repentance, and the word *begapo* (by himself) contains an allusion to the phrase :"upon the back of the highest (*gape merome*) places of the city" (Prov. IX, 3); that is to say: as Wisdom dwells in high and lofty places, so does the man who has repented of his sin attain an eminent position; therefore sinners who repent can enter where even the perfectly righteous are not admitted. Most assuredly the Holy One accepts every sinner who turns to Him. Such a one is set upon the way of life, and, notwithstanding his former stain, everything is put right and restored to its former position. Even when the Holy One has decreed most solemnly against a person, He forgives entirely where there is a perfect repentance. Thus we find it written concerning Jehoiachin: "As I live, says the Lord, if thou Coniah the son of Jehoiakim wert the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee hence . . . write ye this man childless . . ." (Jer. XXII, 24–30); and yet, when he repented and turned again unto the Lord, we read: "And the *sons of Jeconia*, Assir, etc." (1 Ch. III, 17), showing that after all he was not childless: which proves that repentance annuls all decrees and judgements, and breaks many an iron chain, and there is nothing that can stand against it. This is also indicated in the words: "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men that transgress against me" (Isa. LXVI, 24). It does not say: "who *have transgressed*", but "who *transgress*": namely those who go on transgressing without thinking of repentance; but as soon

[1] Which is the source of all souls.

as they are penitent and remorseful for their sins the Holy One receives them again. The same applies here: this man (who rejected procreation), although he has sinned and impaired a vital part, when he repents and turns to Him the Holy One has pity on him and receives him again; for He is full [106b] of mercy towards all His works, as it is written: "His tender mercies are over all his works" (Ps. CXLV, 9). His mercies extend even to animals and birds, still more to human beings who know how to praise their Lord. As David expressed it: "Many are thy tender mercies, O Lord: quicken me according to thy Judgement" (Ps. CXIX, 156). Now, if His tender mercies are vouchsafed to sinners, how much more to righteous men ! Who is it that needs healing ? He who is sick. And who is sick if not the sinner ? Therefore, when sinners turn to the Lord for healing and mercy, He stretches out His right hand to receive them. When God draws a man to Himself He draws him with His right hand, but when He pushes him away He does so with His left hand.[1] And even when the left hand pushes away, the right draws near, for the Holy One, blessed be He, does not withhold His tender mercy from sinners. Observe how the Scripture says first, "And he went on frowardly in the way of his heart", and immediately afterwards, "I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also and impart consolations (*ni'umim*) unto him and to his mourners" (Isa. LVII, 17, 18). This shows that even when sinners commit sin purposely, walking according to the desires of their own hearts, and heeding not the warnings of others, even for such, when they repent and begin to walk in the way of righteousness, is healing prepared.

'Now this verse will repay a little closer consideration. The question is, does it refer to the living or to the dead ? For the beginning and the end seem to conflict with one another, the first part referring to the living and the second to the dead. We may, however, interpret thus. As long as a man is alive and walks "frowardly in the way of his heart" because the evil inclination is strong in him, making it hard for him to repent and start a new life, the Holy One, seeing the wasted life of him who walks in the evil way, says: "I must give him

[1] Cf. T. B. Sanhedrin, 107b.

strength. I see his ways of darkness, and I must open in his heart a way of repentance and bring healing to his soul." This is the meaning of "I will lead him"—like one who takes hold of somebody's hand and leads him out of darkness. As to the second part: "and impart consolations unto him and to his mourners", this language would naturally apply to the dead, and so indeed it does, for is not a sinner dead, even though he be alive? The meaning of the words, then, is as follows. Through the grace of God, when a person is thirteen years old, two angels are appointed over him, one at his right hand and one at his left. When he walks in the right way these angels rejoice over him and are glad, and joyfully cling to him, proclaiming before him: "Give honour to the King's image!" But when he turns from the path of rectitude and walks in crooked ways his angels mourn over him and turn away from him. Therefore, when the Holy One grants the sinner grace to repent and strength to accomplish his return to righteousness, "He imparts repentance to him, and consolations to his mourners" (*niḥumim* in the double sense of "repentance" and "consolation"), and the man himself is truly and perfectly alive, being joined to the Tree of Life. And, being united with the Tree of Life, he is called "a man of repentance", for he is become a member of the Community of Israel, which is designated by the word "*teshubah*" (repentance, return), and "repentant sinners can enter even where the perfectly righteous are not admitted."

'King David said: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight" (Ps. LI, 5). The significance of this is as follows. It is possible to commit sins which are offences both against God and man; also one can commit sins which are offences against man but not against the Holy One; but there are also sins which are committed against the Holy One only. David's sin was of this last kind. Perhaps, however, you will be inclined to question this, saying, [107a] "But what of his sin with Bathsheba? Did he not sin against her husband—to whom she was now prohibited—as well as against the Holy One?" To this query there is an answer, and it is this. According to tradition Uriah, as was the custom with the warriors in Israel, gave his wife a bill of divorcement

before he went out to battle, and so David did not sin against Uriah in the sense of perfidiously robbing him of his wife. And therefore we read: "And David comforted Bathsheba *his wife*" (2 Sam. XII, 24), which is a proof that she was considered as David's lawful wife, destined for him since the beginning of time, since the day whereon the world was created. Thus his sin was an offence against the Holy One alone. And in what did that offence consist? Not in that he commanded Joab to set Uriah in the forefront of the battle so that he might be killed—for David had a right to do that, as Uriah called Joab "my lord Joab" while in the king's presence, which was disrespectful (*lèse-majesté*)—but because he did not kill him then, but let him be killed by the sword of the children of Ammon (*Ibid.* v. 24); for on every Ammonite sword was engraved a crooked serpent, the image of a dragon, which was their god. Said the Holy One to David: "Thou hast imparted strength to that abomination"; for when the sons of Ammon had killed Uriah and many other Israelites, and the sword of Ammon prevailed, it was as if the pagan god prevailed against the God of Israel. Nor does the title "Hittite" show that Uriah was not virtuous: he was merely called so after the place whence he came, as Jephthah was called "the Gileadite" (Judges XI, 1) because he was from Gilead. Thus the power of the abomination prevailed against the camp of God, and, David's hosts being in the very image of the supernal hosts, when he brought a stain upon the hosts below he caused, as it were, a stigma also on the hosts above. That was his sin, and therefore he said: "Against thee only have I sinned, and done evil in thine eyes"—"in thine eyes" literally, as much as to say that David was conscious that he had sinned against the omnipresent and all-penetrating eyes of God. "That thou mightest be justified in thy words, and be clear in thy judgements" (*Ibid.*), and so I may not have any cause of saying that thou art wrong and I am right. The point of these words is as follows. We know that every man naturally uses the language of his occupation. Now David had been a king's jester, and so, though in sore distress and tribulation, when he found himself before the King, he reverted straightway to his quips

and witticisms in order to entertain the King. He said: "Lord of the world ! I said, Prove me, O Lord, and try me" (Ps. XXVI, 2), and Thou declaredst that I would not be able to withstand temptation. Therefore I have now sinned in order that Thou mayest be justified in Thy words, for if I did not so, my assertion would be proved true and Thy assertion refuted !" We have also been taught that David was not led away by his passions when he committed that sin with Bathsheba; for he said of himself: "My heart is hollowed within me" (Ps. CIX, 22), [107*b*] and he meant by this: "There are two chambers in my heart, one containing blood, and the other spirit; the one which is filled with blood is the seat of the evil inclination, but my heart is void of that inclination, for I do not allow it to dwell there." Why, then, did David commit that sin ? In order to give an opening to sinners so that they might be able to say: "King David sinned, but when he repented the Holy One forgave him; and if he was forgiven, there is still greater hope that common folk such as we shall receive forgiveness !" That is what David meant by saying: "I will teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall return unto thee" (Ps. LI, 14). It is also written of David that he "went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, going up and weeping, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot" (2 Sam. XV, 30). He did this to show that he considered himself excommunicated, in order to receive his punishment, and his people kept away from him a distance of four cubits. Blessed is the servant who worshipped his Master thus, confessing his sin and turning back to Him with perfect repentance ! See, now. The insulting behaviour of Shimei, the son of Gera (2 Sam. XVI, 5), towards David was worse than anything he had hitherto experienced, and yet David did not answer him a word, accepting the humiliation as deserved, and therefore his sins were forgiven him.

'It is here fitting to consider why Shimei, who was a scholar and a wise man, behaved to David as he did. The truth is that the words of insult and cursing which he uttered were not his own, but entered into his heart from another region (from heaven), for David's benefit, that he might repent with a perfect repentance, with a broken heart and

with many tears before the Holy One. Therefore David said: "The Lord hath said unto him, Curse David" (*Ibid.* v. 10). He knew that the cursing and words of insult were inspired from above. Among the injunctions which David on his death-bed laid upon Solomon, two were of special importance: one concerning Joab and one concerning Shimei. Of Joab he said: "Moreover, thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruia did to me" (1 Kings II, 5). The words "thou knowest" indicate that even Solomon ought not really to have known this, but since others knew of it David told him also. Concerning Shimei he said: "And behold, thou hast with thee Shimei, the son of Gera" (*Ibid.* v. 8). "With thee" means: "he is always with thee"; for he was Solomon's teacher. We read, "And the king sent and called for Shimei and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem" (*Ibid.* v. 36). Where, we may ask, was the great wisdom in this ? It was, indeed, wiser than it seems. Solomon did all things in wisdom; he knew that Shimei was a wise man, and he said to himself: "I desire him to spread knowledge in the land, and he therefore must not go from Jerusalem, the centre." Another thing did Solomon see in his wisdom, for it says concerning Shimei that "he came forth (*yoṣe yaṣo*) and cursed" (2 Sam. XVI, 5), suggesting that there were two "comings forth": one from the house of study in order to meet David and abuse him, and the second from Jerusalem to Gath to meet his servants (1 Kings II, 40); one to meet a king and the other to meet his own servants. And Solomon saw by means of the Holy Spirit the second "coming forth" of Shimei, and concerning this he said to him: "It shall be that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die" (1 Kings II, 37). Shimei "cast dust" at David (II Sam. XVI, 13), and Solomon referred to water when he prohibited him to cross the brook Kidron: dust and water were the means of testing the woman who was suspected of adultery (Num. V, 11–31), and these two symbols were in the mind of Solomon when he thought of Shimei, who maligned his father. In his charge to Solomon concerning this Shimei, David said: "And behold thou hast with thee Shimei . . . which cursed me with a strong curse . . . and

I sware to him by the Lord saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword." Was Shimei, then, a fool to accept an oath like this, which forbade David only to kill him with a sword, but not with a spear or arrow ? But this sentence can be taken in two ways. One is based on the saying of the son of the great fish [108*a*] whose scales reached the highest clouds (i.e. whose wisdom was great), that when David swore he swore by his sword upon which was engraved the Ineffable Name (Tetragrammaton); and thus he swore to Shimei, as it is written: "I sware to him by the Lord (YHVH) . . . I will not put thee to death (swearing) by the sword." But Solomon interpreted it differently. He said: "This man cursed my father with words; he shall die by means of a Word (Tetragrammaton)." And, in fact, he did not kill him with the actual sword, but with the Name. There is still, however, a difficulty, namely, that since David swore to him he ought not to have killed him, and that David said something with his lips which he did not mean in his heart. But the fact is that David did not kill him. [As to the question why he did not pardon him], it is well known that the members of the human body can receive foreign particles into themselves without real damage, except the heart, which cannot receive even a hair without being damaged; and in a sense David was, as it were, the heart of humanity and so very sensitive, yet he received such insults as surely ought not to have been left unpunished. Therefore he said: "For thou art a wise man and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him" (1 Kings II, 8).

'David in the same Psalm goes on to say: "For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (vv. 17, 18). "Thou desirest not sacrifice." But has not the Holy One ordered sacrifices for the forgiveness of sin ? It is to be noted, however, that David spake this in regard to the Divine Name *Elohim*, that is, the attribute of severe judgement: sacrifices must be brought to the Name YHVH, the attribute of Mercy, as this is the Name always mentioned in connection with the different kinds of sacrifices (Lev. I, 2; II, 1; III, 6), but to the Name Elohim the only sacrifice that

can be offered is a broken spirit and a sorrowful heart, as it is written, "The sacrifices of Elohim are a broken spirit." For this reason a person who has had a bad dream must wear a sad and sorrowful demeanour, for he stands under the attribute of Elohim, and the sacrifice of the attribute of Justice must express itself through sadness and self-abasement, and such sadness is in itself sufficient fulfilment of the dream, and judgement will not exercise its sway over such a one, since he has brought the fitting sacrifice to the attribute of Judgement. When David says "A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise", he indicates that the Holy One, blessed be He, does despise a proud and arrogant heart. "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion ; build thou the walls of Jerusalem." There is a double goodness mentioned here. For from the day whereon the Holy One occupied Himself with the building of the supernal Temple, even until this present time, that "goodness of His good pleasure" has not rested upon the edifice, and therefore it has not attained to complete perfection; but when this "good pleasure" shall be aroused the Lord will fill the edifice with such an array of lights that even the heavenly angels will not be able to look steadfastly upon it, and then the building, and indeed the whole work of the Holy One, blessed be He, shall be completed.

"The text continues: "Build thou the walls of Jerusalem." But has He then not built them already ? Indeed, did He not begin to raise them at the time when He first began to be occupied with the building of the Temple ? And if He has not built the walls, what need to say that He has not built the Temple ? However, the Holy One, blessed be He, acts not as men. When human beings built the sanctuary here below, they first built the city walls for protection and then the sanctuary; but the Holy One will first build the Sanctuary and then, when He brings it down from heaven, and sets it in its rightful place, then "He will build the walls of Jerusalem"—the battlements of the Blessed City. Therefore David says first: "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion", and then: "Build [108*b*] thou the walls of Jerusalem." A great and deep mystery is contained in these words. In all His other acts and deeds it may be noted that God made

first that which is external and then that which is within; but with regard to the sanctuary the very reverse is the case. Although, for instance, He designed the brain first in thought, yet in fact the cranium comes first. For the shell in all cases emanates from the "other side", and what is of the "other side" always appears first; the husk is there to guard the fruit and then it is thrown away, as it says, "The wicked prepareth and the righteous shall put it on" (Job XXVII, 17): the husk is thrown away and a blessing is uttered on the Righteous One. But in regard to the future building of the Sanctuary, when the evil side shall become extinct and disappear from the face of the earth, this will not be necessary, as both the "brain" and the "husk" will be utterly His. First the "brain", signified by the words: "Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion"; and then the "husk": "Build thou the walls of Jerusalem"; signifying that in the time of the Kingdom of the Messiah the outer protective covering will no more be the powers of the "evil side", but, instead, the Holy One Himself; as it is written: "I will be unto her a wall of fire round about" (Zech. II, 5). Now, Israel is the supreme "brain" of the world. They were first in the mind of the Creator, and therefore it is that the heathen nations, who are but the "husk", gained the start of them, as it is written: "And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel" (Gen. XXVII, 29). But in the future the Holy One will form the brain first without waiting for the husk, as it says: "Israel is holiness unto the Lord, the firstfruit of His increase"; and because of this, "all that devour him shall be considered guilty, evil shall come upon them" (Jer. II, 3). "Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness" (Ps. LI, 20); for in that time all things will be perfectly united and the Holy Name shall also be united in its harmonious wholeness, and sacrifices will be offered to the united Names YHVH Elohim, and shall not be as in former days when Elohim had no part in the sacrifice—since, if it had had, all the powers of the "other side" would have been on the alert to participate. At that time, "Thou art great and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone" (Ps. LXXXVI, 10),

and there will be no other God. It is concerning this time that it is written: "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with me; I kill, and I make alive" (Deut. XXXII, 39). The double "I, I" indicates the absoluteness of the Divine Presence in the Messianic time, when the "other side" shall be vanquished and be no more seen; and even death, which until that time was connected with the "other side", will thenceforth be from Him directly, for those who have not yet experienced physical death, and He will raise them immediately; for nothing of that filth of sin which is the cause of death will remain in the world, and there will be a new world, fashioned and perfected by the hands of the Holy One, blessed be He.

"To return to the word *begapo:* the Targum (Aramaic) translation of this is "by himself", which is indeed correct. But *gapo* can also (in Aramaic) mean "wing", and we may therefore connect it with the dictum that the whole world is sustained upon one single "wing" of the Leviathan. The inner meaning is as follows. In the beginning the Holy One, blessed be He, created the Leviathan according to the two kinds, male and female; but whenever they moved the earth shook, and had the Holy One not castrated the male and cooled the sexual instincts of the female, they would eventually have brought the whole world into chaos and destruction. So, because of this, these monsters did not engender; therefore a man who does likewise—that is, who does not engender—if "he comes *be-gapo*, with one wing", is brought under the domination of that wing of the castrated Leviathan, and he "shall go out *be-gapo*": that is to say, he will be thrust out from the other world and never enter within the curtain. Mark this. It is written: "They will die as solitaries (*aririm*) without offspring" (Lev. XX, 21). The word *aririm* is both masculine and feminine, indicating that a man who refuses to generate leaves the world in the sphere of femininity, although he first entered it in the sphere of masculinity. The Holy One, blessed be He, suffers not any man who has emasculated himself in this world to appear before Him, just as in a similar fashion no castrated animal was a permitted sacrifice (Lev. XXII, 24). [109a] It is prohibited throughout

all generations to castrate any creature which the Holy One has created, for castration appertains eternally and in all cases to the "other side". And when a person marries a woman and he or she refuses to generate, and so enter into the other world without having begotten any children, then "his wife shall go out with him": which signifies that he undergoes transmigration by himself as a male, and she by herself as a female.

'The text continues: "If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself." "His master" is "the Lord of the whole earth"; "have given him a wife": from this we learn that it is not in the discretion of man himself to take a wife, but that all things have to be "laid in the balance" (Ps. LXII, 10). And who is the woman whom the Master gives him in this case? One who was not actually intended to be his wife, but the wife of another whom he managed to anticipate in God's good graces, and his Master permitted him to have her because He foresaw that she would bear him children. Now when this man, having, as it were, produced fruit in a garden not rightfully his, shall come to the end of his earthly life, "the wife and her children shall be her Master's, and he shall go out by himself." Poor unfortunate! All his labour was thus in vain. He strove to bring forth fruit in an alien garden, in order to obey the dictates of his Master, and must perforce come out empty! Old man, old man! Confronted with such a problem as this, thou art indeed like unto a man lying helpless and powerless on the ground, who can only kick at the gate with his feet. But take courage, old man, and be not afeared. Now, why is it that this poor soul has perforce to go out from this world empty and alone? Is it because he had sown in a garden which was not his own? Surely not so, for was it not the Holy One Himself who gave him this garden? However, no deed is done by the Lord but has its reason and its justice; and as in all other cases, so also in this. He to whom the Holy One has given a wife, and who has generated with her, is not like others who undergo transmigration. One who in this world truly and humbly endeavoured to make the tree fruitful, but

who did not succeed in his attempt, is not to be placed in the same category with one who consciously and wilfully refused the duty of engendering children, so uprooting the tree, scattering its leaves, and wasting its fruit. He to whom the Master gave a wife in order that he might generate children did after all endeavour to enrich the tree, though he did not succeed. The Holy One, therefore, knowing his good intention, has pity on him and, after first collecting His own due, and taking what the fount formerly failed to produce, permits him to start anew, and labour for himself in order to make good his deficiency. In addition it must be remembered that the man has to undergo transmigration because he is not, in any case, of great merit: since if he were so he would not have had to pass into another form and live again upon the earth, but would at once have "a place better than sons and daughters".

'So much, then, for the mysteries contained in this verse. But, old man, old man, thou hast spoken of one whose work was in vain, and dost not observe that thou thyself hast uttered nought but vanity in all this discourse! For close on thy heels is a verse which overthrows all thy edifice, and thou imaginest that thou couldst swim the sea according to thy pleasure! What is this verse? "If the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, etc." Old man, old man, thou hast no strength, thy power is fled! What wilt thou do? Thou didst think that there would be none to pursue thee, and now, alas, this verse springs out from its ambush, leaping after thee like a gazelle in the field with thirteen bounds[1] till it overtake thee. What wilt thou do, old man? Nay, be not downcast. Now must thou gather up thy strength, for until this day thou wert in very deed a mighty warrior. Old man, old man, remember that day of snow, when the beans of wisdom were sown, and mighty men [109b] fought against thee, and thou didst prevail single-handed over thirteen men of might, each one of whom could slay a lion before breakfast. If thou couldst prevail against those giants, surely thou canst now conquer these thirteen, which are mere weaklings, being but words! On, then, and be bold. The expression "*amor yomar*"

[1] i.e. the thirteen words in the verse.

(if the servant saying shall say) has been interpreted by certain of the scholars according to its literal sense, i.e. that it indicates two sayings, one at the beginning and one at the end of the six years, before the seventh year has entered; for if he said it even a day after the commencement of the seventh year his words have no validity, as it says "the servant", that is, as long as he is still a servant, namely in the sixth year. And if he spake his words at the beginning of the six years but not at the end, then also his words have no validity. Our interpretation is that, if while he is still with this wife he prays daily to the Holy King, then he both begins and ends with supplication; and if he commences with prayer he shall be received with mercy. What does he say? "I love my Master, etc." Then the Holy One, blessed be He, receives him because of his repentance and his prayers. What, then, does He do for such a one? Instead of sending him back to this world to undergo punishment for the sins of his former life, the Holy One gives him instead into the hands of the celestial Tribunal, who judge him and deliver him unto the house of punishment. And the Holy One records how he was delivered to the Tribunal, and places on him a stigma by putting him under the domination of the *Orlah* (unclean spirits)[1] for a certain period of time, after which his Master redeems him. But if the Jubilee should appear during the period of his stigmatization, then he is instantly set free— and this even though he should have been in captivity only one day when the Jubilee appeared— and is permitted to enter within the curtain.'

Then the old man closed his eyes for a moment. . . . [112b] He continued: 'Solomon said: "So I returned and considered all the oppressions ("oppressed") that are done under the sun, and behold the tears of such that were oppressed and they had no comforter" (Eccl. IV, 1). This verse has already been interpreted. But we have still to explain the words, "So I returned and saw." From whence did he return? Now, we have a tradition that Solomon was wont to rise each day at daybreak and turn his face towards the east, where he saw certain things—and then toward the south,

[1] Al. "and puts him under the domination of the Jubilee year".

where also he saw certain things, and finally, to the side of the north. He would stand thus with his head raised and his eyes half-closed until there would come towards him two pillars, one of fire and one of cloud, and borne upon this last an eagle, mighty in stature and strength, his right wing resting upon the fire, and his body and left wing upon the cloud. This eagle bore in his mouth two leaves. The pillar of cloud with the two leaves and the pillar of fire and the eagle upon them, would come and bow before Solomon. Then the eagle would bend down its head a little, and give him the leaves. Solomon would take and smell them, and by their odour could discern from whence they came, and recognize one leaf as belonging to him "who has his eyes shut", and the other to him "who has his eyes open" (cf. Num. XXV, 4). Now there were a number of things which King Solomon desired that these two beings should make known to him. What did he do? He sealed up his throne with a ring on which was engraved the Holy Name, drew forth from a hidden place another ring on which the Holy Name was also engraved, ascended unto the roof of his palace, seated himself upon the eagle's back, and so departed, attended both by fire and cloud. The eagle ascended into the heavens, and wherever he passed the earth below was darkened. The wiser sort in that part of the earth from whence the light was thus suddenly removed would know the cause and would say, "Assuredly that was King Solomon passing by!" but they knew not whither he went. The vulgar sort, however, would say, "Up there the clouds are moving, and that is why it grew dark so suddenly." The eagle would mount up even to the height of four hundred parasangs, until it reached at length the dark mountain, where is Tarmud in the wilderness; and there at last it would descend. Solomon would then lift up his head and see the dark mountain, and would learn therefrom all that it could teach him and also perceive that it was necessary to penetrate further; after which he would mount once more the back of the eagle and fly on as before until they entered into the depths of the mountains, in the midst of which grew an olive tree. When he was arrived at this spot Solomon would cry out with all his might: "Lord, thy hand is lifted up, they see not" (Isa. XXVI, 11). Then he

would enter into that place until he reached those who abode there, and he would show them his ring, and there he gained all his knowledge of strange sciences (i.e. witchcraft). When they had told him all that he required he would [113a] fly back to his palace in the same way that he came. Then, as he sat once more on his throne, he would reflect upon all that he had gone through, and would conceive ideas of profound wisdom; and it is in reference to such an occasion that he says: "So I returned and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun. . . ."

'Could he then have viewed upon his journey *all* such as were oppressed ? Hardly so; but he was referring to the little ones, to the sucklings snatched away from their mothers' breasts. Such as these are indeed "oppressed" from all sides: oppressed above in the celestial regions, and oppressed on earth below. There is none oppressed like those whose oppression is transmitted by heredity, concerning whom it is written: "He visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations" (Ex. xx, 5). How is this ? King Solomon loudly gives the answer when he says, "A man that is oppressed through the blood of his soul shall flee to the pit; no one will stay him" (Prov. xxviii, 17). Since he is "oppressed with the blood of a soul" (i.e. has committed some grievous sin), either he or his son or his son's son will be "oppressed" (i.e. wronged) in the "balance"; he shall flee to the pit away from the place of righteousness and none shall stay him; because he has oppressed the blood of the soul he shall himself be oppressed by the other side, or his seed shall bear this oppression of retribution for him and on his account. Hence it says, "*all* the oppressed", as much as to say, "I have considered all those that are oppressed and all the manners of their oppression, and the reason of their being oppressed." Now, this class of oppressed ones are said to be "made under the sun", because their bodies were actually made before they were violently carried away, there being others who are never so much as fashioned on this earth, though spirits are waiting for them. Others, again, are "made", as it were, in defiance of the Almighty. Thus, when a man steals his neighbour's wife, either openly or secretly,

and a child is born of such adulterous union, and the Holy One has perforce to fashion its body and give it form, then that child is indeed "an oppressed one who is *made* such", literally, in despite of the Almighty. Solomon reflected on this and said: "I consider the sad fate of these hapless oppressed ones who have been 'made', how they shed tears before the Holy One. They complain before Him and make moan, saying, When a person commits a sin he must assuredly die. But, Sovereign of the Universe, when a child is but one day old, shall he be judged ? [113b] These are "the tears of the oppressed ones, who have no comforter". There are many different kinds among them, but they all shed tears. Here is, for instance, a child born in incest. As soon as he emerges into the world he is separated from the community of the holy people, and the unfortunate bastard laments and sheds tears before the Holy One, and complains: "Lord of the world ! If my parents have sinned, wherein is my guilt ? I have ever striven to do only good works before Thee." But the greatest grief of all emanates from those "oppressed ones" that are but little sucklings which have been removed from their mothers' breasts. These can indeed cause the whole world to weep, and there are no tears like unto theirs, for these are tears which spring from the inmost and deepest recesses of the heart, causing the whole world to wonder and say: "The Holy One's judgements are forever righteous and all His paths are ways of truth. But why is it necessary that these poor little ones, who are blameless and without sin, should die ? Where is now the true and righteous judgement of the Lord of the world ? If they must die because of their parents' sins, then they certainly "have no comforter." However, the actual fact is that the tears of these "oppressed ones" intercede for and protect the living, and because of their innocence and the power of their intercession a place is eventually prepared for them such as even the perfect righteous cannot attain to or occupy; for the Holy One does in truth love them with a special and particular love, He unites Himself with them and prepares for them a supernal place, very near to Himself. It is concerning such that it is written: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings

hast thou founded strength." What is it that they accomplish there and why went they thither? "Because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger" (Ps. VIII, 3). And there is also another place prepared for sinners who repent.

'We have been taught (cf. Pirke Aboth, ch. V) that ten things were created upon the eve of the Sabbath in the twilight, at the time when the work of Creation was ended and the Sabbath not yet begun; among which are the shape of the written characters, the writing, and the tables of stone; for it is written: "And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables" (Ex. XXXII, 16). Now it may be asked, what proof is there in this verse that these things were indeed created on the eve of the Sabbath, and not perhaps a thousand years later, or, maybe, when the Israelites stood at Mount Sinai? However, there can be no doubt that they were created on the eve of this Sabbath, for the following reason. In the whole account of the Creation (Gen. I) it is always the name *Elohim* which is used to denote God; but after the completion of the whole work God is called with the full name, *YHVH Elohim* (Gen. II, 4). For, although all things were *created*[1] in the power of the Name Elohim, that which was created was not actually *made*[2] until Sabbath eve, when "God ended the work which he had made" (Gen. II, 2); that is to say, Creation only received its permanency with its completion through making. In the same sense it says concerning the tables of stone that they were "the work (*ma'ase*, lit. making) of God", which indicates that they were produced at the time when the consummation of the whole Creation took place through the act of God's "making"—and not in the later period concerning which the Name in its fulness is mentioned—"YHVH Elohim" (Gen. II, 4), and only herewith was the world placed upon a firm basis and permanently established.

'When Moses broke the tablets "under the mountain" (Ex. XXXII, 19), the Ocean overflowed its borders and was on the point of inundating the whole world. When Moses saw how the waves were rising and threatening to overwhelm the

[1] i.e. *in posse*. [2] i.e. *in esse*.

universe, straightway he "took the calf which they had made and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water" (Ex. XXXII, 20). Then he stationed himself before the waters of the Ocean and said: "Waters, waters, what would ye?" And they answered: "Was not the world established by and on the merit of the Holy Words engraved upon the tablets? And now, because the Israelites have denied the Torah by making the golden calf, we desire to overwhelm the world." Then Moses answered them and said: "Behold, all that they have done in connection with the sin of the golden calf is delivered unto you; is it not enough that so many thousands of them have perished for their sin?" Straightway he "strawed it (the dust of the calf) upon the water". But even then the floods were not appeased. So he took from those angry seas a portion of water, and poured it upon the place where he had burned the calf, and then at last the Ocean was soothed and returned to its own bed. For in that wilderness there was no water, as it is written: "It is no place of seed . . . neither is there any water to drink" (Num. XX, 5). Nor can the place whereon Moses strawed the powder have been Miriam's well, for assuredly Moses would never have permitted evil memories to pollute the place whose waters the Israelites would afterwards have had to drink. Besides, the Israelites only received their cistern when they came to the place Mattanah, as it is written: "Spring up, well. . . . The princes digged the well. . . . And from there to Mattanah" (*Ibid.* XXI, 17).[1] As to the words "graven upon the tables" (*ḥarut 'al ha-luḥoth*), it has already been pointed out that this phrase contains an allusion to *ḥeruth*—that is, freedom. Freedom from what? From the angel of death, from subjection to the kingdoms of this world, [114a] from all things earthly and from all things evil. And what is freedom? It is the seal of the world to come, in which is every kind of freedom. Had not the tablets been broken, the world would not have suffered as it subsequently did, and the Israelites would have been in the likeness of the supernal angels above. Therefore the Scripture proclaims: "the tablets were the work of God" (*Elohim*), from the time when the world was

[1] v. T. B. Nedarim, 55a; Erubin, 54a.

still under the ægis of the name *Elohim*, before the Sabbath had entered. The writing, too, was the "writing of God", black fire on white fire, and it was *ḥaruth* (engraved) because the Jubilee proclaims freedom (*ḥeruth*) to all worlds.'

Having spoken these things, the old man paused a moment and then said: 'So far, my friends, and now no further ! From now on ye shall know that the evil side has no power over you; and that I, Jebba the Ancient, have stood before you to utter these words.' The two Rabbis stood before him dumbfounded, like men waking out of their sleep. Then they prostrated themselves before him, and so remained, speechless and awestruck. After a while they wept. Finally R. Ḥiya found his voice again, and spake, saying: ' "Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love is strong as death, zeal is hard as the sheol; the coals thereof are coals of fire, a blaze of Jah" (S.S. VIII, 6). When the Community of Israel cleaves to her Spouse she says: "Set me as a seal upon thy heart." The property of a seal is to leave its impress on the surface wherewith it has come into contact, and this impress naturally remains even after the seal has been removed. So the Community of Israel cries aloud unto her Spouse, saying: "Since I have cleaved to Thee, may my image remain engraven upon Thine heart, so that even when I myself must perforce be driven hither and thither in exile Thou mayst find my likeness there and remember me. May I thus cleave to Thee for ever and not be forgotten of Thee." "For love is strong as death"—as the strength of the region where death dwells is the place called "eternal love". "Her coals are coals of fire." What are these coals ? The diamonds and precious gems which are born of that fire. "A blaze of Jah"—the flame which issues out of the Supernal World to unite itself with the Community of Israel and so bridge the gulf between Heaven and earth and unite both. Of this same quality of love do we also partake in regard to thee, and the coals of that very fire are set within our hearts, warming them towards thee. So may it be the will of the Holy One, blessed be He, that our image may be engraved upon thine heart for ever, as thine is impressed upon ours !'

Then the old man kissed and blessed them, and they

departed. When they reached the dwelling of R.Simeon they recounted everything that had befallen them. R. Simeon was both delighted and amazed. He said: 'Blessed indeed are you in that ye were found worthy of all this ! To think that you were in the presence of this supreme lion of wisdom with whom not even the greatest sages can be compared, and did not recognize him at once ! I am astonished that you have escaped punishment for your disrespect towards him; it is evident that the Holy One desired to spare and save you.' Then he applied to them the verses: "And the path of the righteous is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day"; "When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened, and when thou runnest thou shalt not stumble" (Prov. IV, 12, 18); "and thy people shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of thy planting, the work of thy hands, that I may be glorified" (Isa. LX, 21). Thus ends the incident concerning R. Jebba the Ancient. [121a][1]

AND YE SHALL BE MEN OF HOLINESS UNTO ME; AND FLESH THAT IS TORN BY BEASTS IN THE FIELD YE SHALL NOT EAT; YE SHALL CAST IT TO THE DOG (XXII, 30). R. Judah quoted here the verse: "And wisdom, where shall it be found ? And where is the place of understanding ?" (Job XXVIII, 12). Said he: "Blessed are the Israelites for that the Holy One desires to honour them more than all the rest of mankind. At first He said unto them: "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests" (Ex. XIX, 6). His great love to them was, however, not satisfied until he had added: "and a holy nation" (*Ibid.*), which signifies a higher grade; His love was still not satisfied until He called them "a holy people" (Deut. XIV, 2), which is a still higher grade; and now He shows His endless love to them by calling upon them to be "men of holiness", which is the highest grade and destiny of all. For the Torah itself emanates from Wisdom, from the realm called "holiness", and Wisdom itself emanates from the region called "holy (lit. holiness) of holies".' Said R. Isaac: "The Jubilee is also designated "holiness", as it is written: "For it is the jubilee; it shall be holiness (*kodesh*) unto you"

[1] The pages omitted belong to the *Ray'a Mehemna*.

(Lev. XIV, 12). The Israelites who are destined to be "men of holiness" have a share in both (the Torah and the Jubilee). What is the difference in degree between "holy" and "holiness" ?' Said R. Jose: 'The latter is the extremest, the utmost degree, but not so the former, for it is written: "And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy" (Isa. IV, 3), which signifies that the grade of "holy" is connected with that place (i.e. with the earthly Zion and Jerusalem), [121b] whereas "holiness" is connected with a higher place.' R. Abba was once walking in company with R. Jose and R. Ḥiya. Said R. Ḥiya: 'How do we know that the expression, "and ye shall be unto Me men of holiness", signifies the highest grade ?' Said R. Jose: 'All the companions have interpreted it well; it is truly so, for it is written: "Israel is holiness (*kodesh*) to the Lord, the beginning (*reshith*) of his increase; all that devour him shall be guilty" (Jer. II, 3). Israel is here designated "*reshith*", and Wisdom is also called "*reshith*", as it says, "The beginning (*reshith*) of wisdom is the fear of the Lord" (Ps. CXI, 10). And because Israel is called "holiness", the completion and harmony of all grades, they must not "eat flesh that is torn by beasts in the field"; they must not derive their nourishment from the side of severe judgement, but "cast it to the dogs", namely to the impudent and impure power on which judgement rests; so the people destined to be "men of holiness" should not be stained by the impurity of the principle of evil left in the flesh of the torn animal.'

Once when R. Isaac was studying with R. Simeon, he asked him: 'What is the meaning of the last part of the verse quoted above (Jer. II, 3): "Israel is holiness to the Lord, all that devour him shall be guilty" (*ye'shamu*, will bear their guilt, i.e. will be punished) ?' R. Simeon referred to the passages (Lev. XXII, 10, 14–16) where strangers eating of the holy things "lade themselves with guilt (*ashmah*) of eating". 'Because Israel is called "holy", "holiness", all that "eat" him, that is to say, all the strange nations who try to devour and make an end of him are guilty of consuming something sacred.' Then R. Isaac came to him, kissed his hands, and said: 'It was worth coming here only to hear this ! But,

Master, if, as we have been taught, "holiness" is a higher degree than "being holy", how is one to explain "holy, holy, holy (*kadosh*) is the Lord Zebaoth" ?' R. Simeon replied: 'When the triad (the holy, holy, holy) is united in one unity, it forms one "house", and that house is called "holiness"; it is the essence and core of the "holy"; and when Israel attain to the completeness and perfection of faith, they are called "holiness": "Holiness is Israel to the Lord"; "ye should be unto Me men of holiness".'

A certain legionary once asked R. Abba: 'Is it not written in your Law: "Flesh that is *terepha* (torn by beasts) ye should not eat: ye shall cast it to the dog" ? Why, then, does it say: "He hath given *tereph* (food) to those that fear him" (Ps. CXI, 5) ? Assuredly it ought rather to have said: "He gives *tereph* to the dog" !' R. Abba replied: 'Fool (*Reka*) ! Thinkest thou that *tereph* is the same as *terepha ?* And even if we admit that it is the same, I say that God gave this prohibition only to those that fear His name, and therefore He gave it not to you, since He knows that you do not fear Him and will not keep His commandments; and so with all the restrictions of the Torah.' R. Eleazar taught that the peculiar expression, "men of holiness", contains a reference to the Jubilee, for there is a tradition that the Israelites came out from Egypt into freedom by means of the Jubilee, which is the source of all freedom, both early and everlasting. When they came out into freedom the Jubilee set them upon his wings, and they were called his men, his children. And of the Jubilee it says: "It is jubilee; holiness is it to you." Yea, verily, "to you". Therefore it says here: "Ye shall be unto Me men of holiness", that is, His men, these words having been spoken by the Holy One, blessed be He. [122a] And therefore they become worthy to be known as "brethren of the Holy One", as it is written: "For my brethren and companions' sake, I will now say, Peace be within thee" (Ps. CXXII, 9). Later they were called "holiness" (Jer. *Ibid.*), and not merely "men of holiness". We have been taught that because Israel is designated "holiness" no one is allowed to apply to his neighbour an insulting epithet or to bestow upon him a degrading nickname. The punishment for such an offence is

indeed great. It is written: "Keep thy tongue from evil" (Ps. XXXI, 15). "From evil": for slander and malicious speech cause disease to enter into the world. Said R. Jose: 'He who offends his neighbour by giving him an insulting nickname or by addressing him in abusive terms will himself eventually suffer for offences which he has not committed.' In this connection R. Ḥiya also said in the name of R. Hezekiah: 'He who calls his neighbour "wicked" will be thrown into the very jaws of Gehenna. The only people whom one may legitimately call "wicked" are those who speak impudently and blasphemously against the Torah.'

Once, when on a journey, R. Jesse passed close by a man who was cursing and reviling his neighbour; and the Rabbi said to him: "Thou behavest like a wicked one (*rasha'*)." Those who were with R. Jesse, hearing his words, were shocked, thinking that he had assuredly committed a great offence; so they brought him before R. Judah to be judged. In defence he pleaded that he had not called the man "wicked", but only told him that he had behaved "*like* a wicked one." R. Judah was puzzled, and put the case before R. Eleazar, who said: 'The Rabbi has Scripture on his side, for do we not read: "The Lord was *as* an enemy" (Lam. II, 5)? which obviously does not mean that He actually became an enemy, for had that been the case Israel would certainly have been utterly annihilated. Similarly, we read: "How is she (Jerusalem) become *as* a widow" (*Ibid.* I, 1), which signifies that she is indeed like unto a woman whose husband has gone away to a far country, but for whom she still waits.' Said R. Ḥiya: 'Is there not a better proof than all these, in fact, the standard example, namely: "And upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness *as* the appearance of a man" (Ezek. I, 26)?' Said R. Isaac: 'Also it is written: "*As* the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons" (S.S. II, 3)—as an apple tree which has varied colours, red, white, and green combined in a unity.' Said R. Judah: 'Ah, had I come here only in order to hear these mystic revelations, it would have sufficed! It is also written: "And he that stumbled among them on that day shall be as David" (Zech. XII, 8). "As David", who said: "In my poverty I have prepared for the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold . . ."; "as David", who said of himself: "For I am poor and needy" (Ps. LXXXVI, 1); yea, he called himself thus, who was king above all other earthly kings!' Said R. Abba: "And how blessed are the Israelites for that the Holy One does not call them "*as* holiness", but actually "holiness" itself, as it is written: "Holiness is Israel to the Lord"; and therefore: "all who devour him will be made to bear grievous punishment for their guilt." '

Said R. Jose: 'For what reason did God give Israel rules of judgement after He had given them the Ten Words (the Decalogue)? Because, as we have been taught, the Torah was given from the side of Power (*Geburah*), and therefore He desired to give them peace among themselves in order that the Torah should be observed under both of its aspects. For, as R. Abba has said in the name of R. Isaac, the world is sustained by Justice, as it was created by, and for, the principle of Justice. R. Abba also said that the words: "Execute judgement in the morning" (Jer. XXI, 12) mean that judges should sit in judgement "in the morning", that is, before they have had anything to eat or drink, since he who executes judgement after eating and drinking is not a true judge, as it is written: "Ye shall not eat with the blood" (Lev. XIX, 26), which means that a judge who eats before sitting in judgement is, as it were, guilty of shedding his neighbour's blood, for, indeed, he gives the "blood" of his neighbour to someone else. Now this is merely in reference to money matters; how much more, then, in criminal cases, when it is a question of life and death, should judges beware of eating and drinking before executing judgement!' Said R. Judah: 'He who betrays judgement betrays the supports of the King. And what are these? Those mentioned in the verse, "For I the Lord exercise lovingkindness, judgement, and righteousness" (Jer. IX, 25). All things depend upon these three.' R. Jose said: "These are the stays of the Throne, for it is written: "Righteousness and judgement are the establishment of thy throne" (Ps. LXXXIX, 15); and also "And in lovingkindness will the throne be established" (Isa. XVI, 5). [122b]

AND IN ALL THINGS THAT I HAVE SAID UNTO YOU TAKE YE HEED, ETC. Note the passive form *tishameru* (take heed, lit. ye shall be guarded). We may translate: "From the penalties which I have threatened for a breach of My service ye shall be guarded, so that no harm shall come to you", and therefore, MAKE NO MENTION OF THE NAME OF OTHER GODS. These words may also be expounded thus: 'Ye shall not bring it about that ye shall fall among the nations in a strange land so that there be fulfilled concerning you the words of Scripture: "and there shalt thou serve other gods, etc." (Deut. XXVIII, 36).' R. Judah connected this text with the verses: "Hear, O my people, and I will admonish thee . . . There shall no strange god be in thee . . . I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee up out of the Land of Egypt, etc." (Ps. LXXXI, 9–11). 'These verses', he said, 'David uttered under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and they should be well pondered. "Hear, O My people", is a reminder of the repeated admonitions of the Torah and of the Holy One, blessed be He, to man, and all for the benefit of man, that he observe the commands of the Torah, for when one [124a] observes the ordinances of the Torah and diligently studies it, it is as though he diligently studied the Divine Name. For the whole Torah is an enfolding of the one Divine Name, the most exalted Name, the Name that comprehends all other names; and hence if one diminishes it, even by a single letter, it is as though he made a gap in the Divine Name. Hence, according to our teaching, the words, "and make no mention of the name of other gods", signify "thou shalt not add to the Torah nor diminish from it".' R. Ḥiya said: ' "The name of other gods" signifies profane books which do not issue from the side of the Torah, and hence we are forbidden to study them: NEITHER LET IT BE HEARD OUT OF THY MOUTH, that is, we may not even mention them nor receive teaching from them, especially concerning the Torah.' R. Judah expounded the passage as follows. 'For what reason is the precept concerning other gods closely followed by the precept, THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD SHALT THOU KEEP? Because the non-observance of this festival betokens lack of faith in the Holy

One, blessed be He, since that festival is closely associated with Him.' R. Isaac said: 'It is the same with the other feasts and festivals, as they all are closely bound up with the most exalted Divine Name. Hence the dictum, that religious faith is closely bound up with the three festivals.'

ALL THY MALES. Says R. Eleazar: 'Emphatically "all thy males", as they then receive blessings from the eternal spring. Hence the dictum that every circumcised Israelite is bound to appear before the Holy King so as to receive a blessing from the eternal spring. So Scripture says: "according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee" (Deut. XVI, 17), and here it is written: "before the Lord God", that is, from whence blessings pour and blessings are received. Happy is the portion of Israel above that of all other nations.

On one occasion, when the Israelites were going up to celebrate the festival, a number of idolaters mingled with them. That year there was no blessing in the world. So they came to Rab Ham'nuna the Elder to consult him about the matter. He asked them: 'Did you see any portent of this beforehand?' They replied: 'We noticed on our return journey that everywhere the waters were dried up, and there was continuous cloud and darkness, so that the pilgrims could not proceed on their way. Furthermore, when we went in to show ourselves, the face of heaven was darkened.' R. Ham'nuna trembled and said: 'There is no doubt but either there are among you some who are uncircumcised or that idolaters mingled themselves in your company. For at that time blessings come into the world only through circumcised Israelites. The Holy One, blessed be He, looks at the sacred symbol and sends down the blessing.' The following year again a number of idolaters intruded themselves among the pilgrims who went up to Jerusalem. Then when the festive offerings were being joyfully eaten, the Israelites noticed those people covering their faces with their cloaks, and on further watching them they discovered that they did not pronounce a blessing over the meal, like all the others. This was communicated to the Court of Judges, who

examined the strangers and asked them what kind of offering was that of which they had eaten a portion ? As they could not give a satisfactory answer, further inquiries were made, and it was discovered that they were idolaters, and so they were put to death. The people said: "Blessed is the Merciful One who delivered His people, for assuredly blessing only rests on Israel, the holy seed, the children of Faith, the children of Truth." That year was one of rich blessing in the world, and the people exclaimed: "Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name, etc." (Ps. CXL, 14). R. Ḥiya said: 'Through the merit of Israel circumcised their enemies have been subdued before them and their possessions inherited by them. Hence the verse: "Three times in the year shall all thy males appear, etc." (Ex. XXXIV, 23) is immediately followed by the verse: "For I will cast out nations before thee and enlarge thy borders" (*Ibid.* 24); for the Holy One, blessed be He, uproots one group of inhabitants and restores another, and therefore "shall all thy males appear before the Lord God".' [124*b*]

THE LORD (*Adon*) GOD. R. Judah said: 'Sometimes the superior aspect of the Deity is called by the lower Name, at other times it is the lower aspect that is given the superior Name. Here, in the phrase "before the Lord God" (*ha-ADoN YHVH*), the lower term *Adon* (Lord) is expressive of the superior aspect. This matter has already been expounded, and expounded in various ways, which, however, all converge into one. Blessed be the Merciful One, blessed be His name for evermore !'

BEHOLD, I SEND AN ANGEL BEFORE THEE. R. Isaac quoted in this connection the words: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth" (S.S. I, 2), and said: 'It is the Community of Israel who says this (to God). Why does she say "Let Him kiss me" instead of "Let Him love me" ? Because, as we have been taught, kissing expresses the cleaving of spirit to spirit; therefore the mouth is the medium of kissing, for it is the organ of the spirit (breath). Hence he who dies by the kiss of God[1] is so united with another

[1] According to the Haggadah, Moses and certain other saints died "by the kiss of God".

Spirit, with a Spirit which never separates from him. Therefore the Community of Israel prays: "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth", that His Spirit may be united with mine and never separate from it. The verse continues: "For thy love is better than wine" (*Ibid.*). Why is the love of the Holy One compared with wine, which was the cause of Ephraim's degradation (Isa. XVIII, 27), and was prohibited to the priests at the time of service (Lev. X, 9) ? Said R. Ḥiya: 'It is better even than the "wine of the Torah".' R. Hezekiah said: 'It is better than the wine of which the Psalmist said that it "maketh glad the heart of man" (Ps. CIV, 15).' R. Judah referred to the verse: "And Jacob kissed Rachel and lifted up his voice and wept" (Gen. XXIX, 11). Why did he weep ? Because the intensity of his attachment to her overpowered him, and he found relief in tears. It is true, it also says of Esau that "he kissed him (Jacob) and they wept" (Gen. XXXIV, 4); but as has been said, the word *wa-yishakehu* (and he kissed him) has (masoretic) dots on it, to indicate the insincerity of Esau's kisses,[1] for there was no union of spirit with spirit there; and concerning him it is written: "The kisses of an enemy are abundant" (Prov. XXVII, 6; i.e. superfluous, burdensome); they are windy and betoken no attachment of spirit. As long as the Holy One was dwelling and moving in the midst of Israel there was a perfect union between Spirit and spirit; concerning which it is written: "And ye who cleave to the Lord your God, ye are all alive to-day" (Deut. IV, 4); they clave to one another in every possible manner, and were not separated. But when Moses heard the words, "Behold, I send an angel before thee", he knew that it meant separation, therefore he said: "If thy presence go not, carry us not up hence" (Ex. XXXIII, 15). Said R. Abba: 'Note the verse that immediately precedes, viz., "The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord Thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk." The connection is as follows. This verse indicates that one may not mingle lower grades (the k'lifoth) with higher ones (sefiroth), lest the outer side should imbibe nourishment from the inner one, the

[1] Cf. Aboth de R. Nathan, XXXIII.

one being from the side of impurity and the other from that of holiness. The "mother" here mentioned is the Community of Israel (the Shekinah), who is called Mother, and the "kid" symbolizes the principle of impurity. Therefore God said, "[Since you may indeed cause such separation] behold, I send My angel before thee". But Moses said: "I take this command [not to seethe a kid in its mother's milk] as a promise that Thou wilt not separate from us; therefore, 'if thy presence go not, carry us not up hence'." ' Said R. Eleazar: 'This the Holy One said in order to soothe the fears of Israel, because He loved them. He was like unto a king who always desired to walk with his son and never entrusted him to anybody else. The son once came to his father [125a], but felt chary of asking him to go out with him. The latter noticing it, said: "Captain So-and-so will accompany thee upon this way and will take care of thee"; then adding: "Beware of him" (v. 21), for he is somewhat quick-tempered. Then said the son: "If so, either I shall remain here or else thou must come with me; for I shall not separate myself from thee." In a similar fashion the Holy One first said: "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not." Then Moses said: "If Thy presence go not, carry us not up hence." ' When R. Simeon came, he found the Companions discussing this subject. Said he: 'Eleazar my son, thou hast spoken well, yet mark this. On this occasion (when God said that He would send an angel) Moses said nothing and did not object, because no separation was implied in the promise.[1] I have already explained this to the companions. It is true, some understand it just in the opposite way,[2] but that is not according to the interpretation of the ancients (although at bottom there is no contradiction between the two). Here, as I have said, Moses did not object, but he did later, when the Holy One again said: "I will send an angel before thee" (Ex. XXXIII, 2), without saying anything more about him. But here we have the additional explanation concerning the character of the angel,

[1] i.e. because the Angel here denominates Malkuth. [2] That the Angel here denominates Metatron.

for it says: "But if thou shalt indeed obey his (the angel's) voice and do all that I speak—", indicating that God would speak through the angel; and similarly it continues, "Then will I be an enemy to thine enemies, and will afflict them that afflict thee", showing that everything depends upon him.' Said R. Judah: 'Should one say that on both occasions it is merely an angel that is referred to, then we have to say that Moses made no objection on the first occasion because he did not see an opportunity, but on the second occasion he did object, saying, "If Thy presence go not, carry us not up hence." ' To which R. Simeon remarked: 'The long and the short of it is that Moses did not desire that an angel should accompany them, therefore he said: "If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us" (Ex. XXXIV, 9).'

Said R. Judah: 'In regard to R. Abba's interpretation of the words: "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk" (*v. supra*), ought not this passage according to him to have read, "in *the* mother's" rather than "in *his* mother's"? For if the "kid" represents the spirit of impurity and the "mother" the Shekinah, dare one thus assert that the Community of Israel (the Shekinah) is the "mother" of the spirit of impurity—the Community of Israel, concerning whom R. Simeon has said that the Holy Mother is the very essence of Israel, part and parcel of her being, as it is written: "For the Lord's portion is his people" (Deut. XXXII, 9)?' R. Simeon replied: 'Your question is good, and yet R. Abba's remark is correct. See now. Two powers hold fast to the Shekinah, imbibing strength from Her strength, and clinging one to Her right hand and one to Her left. Therefore some incline towards the right and some towards the left, and all depend upon this holy "Mother". But the things of the Left are attached to this Mother only when she herself imbibes from the "other side", and the sanctuary is defiled and the mighty serpent begins to manifest himself. Then "the kid sucks of *his* mother's milk", and judgement is aroused. For this reason the Israelites hastened to bring the firstfruits, and when the priest had taken the basket of fruit from the hands of an Israelite and set it down before the

altar, the latter would begin to recite the story of how Laban ("the Syrian", cf. Deut. XXVI, 5) came with his witchcraft to subject Jacob and his holy descendants, but did not succeed, and Israel was not delivered to the "other side". It is concerning this that it is written: "The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord Thy God. Thou shalt not seethe the kid in his mother's milk", so that the "kid", namely the "other side", should not suck the milk of his "mother", and the sanctuary be not defiled, and the severe judgements be not roused. Therefore the holy seed is prohibited to eat flesh together with milk,[1] in order that a place in holiness should not be allotted to him who does not belong to it; for on this action the thing depends: the act below affects the activity above. Blessed are the Israelites above all the heathen nations for that their Lord says concerning them: "Ye are the children of the Lord your God"; "Thou art an holy people to the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself above all the nations that are upon the earth" (Deut. XIV, 1, 2).

'It is set forth in the mysteries of King Solomon's book that he who eats a composite of flesh and milk, or drinks milk shortly after eating meat, will appear for a space of forty days to the vision of the accusing angels in the aspect of a slaughtered goat, with myriads of impure powers [125b] surrounding him, and he causes unholy judgements to be awakened in the world. And should he beget a son during those forty days, the latter will imbibe his soul and the breath of his spirit from the "other side". It says: "Ye shall sanctify yourself and ye shall be holy" (Lev. XI, 44), which signifies that he who endeavours to be holy is assisted from above, and, contrariwise, he who defiles himself is drawn on to defilement by the unholy powers, as it is written in the preceding verse (43): "Ye shall not make yourselves unclean . . . that ye shall be defiled." This is an impurity which is exceedingly gross, and which cannot be done away with by means of purification as can other defilements. Besides, such a person, having come to look, even in outer

[1] T. Onkelos to Ex. XXIII, 19.

seeming, like a goat—as we have said—goes in constant fear of wild animals, for the human image has disappeared from both his inner and his outer aspects. R. Jesse used at one time to allow the eating of chicken with cheese or with milk. But R. Simeon said unto him: 'Thou must not permit this, lest thou thereby open the door to evil powers. Does one not say to a Nazarite: "Go away, go away, depart and come not near the vineyard!"? I say to thee, thou must not do this thing! If thou allowest such prohibited minglings of foods it is as though thou gavest wine unto a Nazarite. It is written: "Thou shalt not eat any abomination" (Deut. XIV, 3), where the word "any" includes every kind and sort of food which is forbidden.' There is a tradition that Daniel, Hananniah, Mishael and Azariah were delivered from their trials only because they had not defiled themselves with forbidden food. Said R. Judah: 'It is written: "And Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat" (Dan. I, 8), and there is a tradition that the wicked Nebuchadnezzar used, apart from the other strange dishes for which he had a partiality, to eat flesh with milk and cheese with meat. Because Daniel refrained from partaking of such food, when he was thrown into the lions' den, he attained fully to the image of the Lord, his perfected human form not changing to any other, so that the lions were struck with awe before him and did him no harm. On the other hand, when the wicked Nebuchadnezzar was deprived of his kingdom and he dwelt with the beasts of the field, his human countenance was taken away from him and from that day he did not bear the impress of a man, so that all the beasts of the field considered him as one of themselves, and would readily have devoured him, had it not been that it was decreed from heaven that he should become an object of derision to all men, just as he in his time had "scoffed at kings" (Hab. I, 10). It is written concerning Daniel and his companions that "at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter than the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat" (Dan. I, 5). This was because the image of their Lord was not removed from them, whereas from those others it was. What was the cause of this? The

fact that they did not pollute themselves with the abomination of the prohibited food. Blessed are the Israelites who are called to be a "holy people" !'

AND TO MOSES HE SAID, COME UP UNTO THE LORD. Who said this ? The Shekinah. "Come up unto the Lord": as it is written, "And Moses went up to God" (Ex. XIX, 3). And for what other purpose was Moses called up ? To establish the covenant, for until that time it had not yet been completed because of the incomplete circumcision of the Israelites, as it is written: "There (at Marah) he made for them a statute and an ordinance" (Ex. XV, 25), these referring to the two acts connected with circumcision; "and there he proved them" (*Ibid.*), that is, when the holy sign of the covenant was manifested in them. Then the covenant was established through Moses, as it is written: "And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant . . ." (*Ibid.* XXIV, 8). R. Isaac drew attention to the verse: "And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins ; and half of the blood he sprinkled upon the altar" (*Ibid.* V, 6). 'The "upon" ', said he, 'is of special significance, indicating that the covenant was made with the highest grade.'

AND WORSHIP YE AFAR OFF. The words "afar off" contain the same indication as in the verses, "The Lord appeared to me from afar" (Jer. XXXI, 2), and "and his sister stood afar off" (Ex. II, 4): namely, as R. Abba pointed out, that until that time the Moon (that is, the Shekinah) was on the wane, for Her light was obscured from before the eyes of the Israelites; but when that hour was arrived they were made more worthy of their holy portion, and established a holy covenant with Her and with the Holy One in all His aspects.

Why did the Shekinah say to Moses, "Go up to the Lord" ? In order that "Israel and I may now, through thy mediation, participate as one being in the Divine perfection, which has not been the case hitherto". So what did Moses do ? He divided the blood into two parts: "half of the blood he

sprinkled upon [126a] the altar"—according to the significance which we have already revealed—and the other half he sprinkled upon the people and said: "behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you" (v. 8). HE PUT THE BLOOD IN BASINS. This is an allusion to the words: "Thy navel is a round basin" (S.S. VII, 7), which is applied to the Shekinah.

AND MOSES ALONE SHALL COME NEAR TO THE LORD. Happy was the lot of Moses in obtaining a privilege vouchsafed to no other mortal ! The Israelites, too, attained to more exalted heights than ever before. In that hour they were established in the holy covenant, and given the glad tidings that a sanctuary should be erected in their midst, as it is written: "And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (XXV, 8).

AND THEY SAW THE GOD OF ISRAEL, AND THERE WAS UNDER HIS FEET AS IT WERE A PAVED WORK OF A SAPPHIRE STONE. Said R. Judah: 'It is written: "This thy stature is like to a palm tree" (S.S. VII, 8). What love, indeed, has the Holy One bestowed upon the Community of Israel in that He never separates Himself from her, but is perpetually and perfectly united with her, even as a palm tree in which male and female are one in complete and continual union ! See now. When Nadab and Abihu and the seventy elders "saw", what did they actually see ? "They saw the God of Israel", that is to say, the Shekinah manifested Herself unto them.' But R. Jose interpreted the demonstrative pronoun *eth* in this verse ("and they saw *eth* the God of Israel") as denoting something more, over and above R. Judah's exposition, a kind of extra quality of enlightenment, as it were—although what they saw they saw from a distance. R. Isaac asked: [It says here, "Under his feet was as it were a work of sapphire stone, but Ezekiel said] "This is the living creature (Ḥayah) which I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar" (Ezek. X, 20). Now, which Ḥayah is here indicated ?' R. Jose replied in the name of R. Ḥiya that the reference is to the little

Ḥayah.[1] 'But is there then such a little Ḥayah?' 'Yes, assuredly there is. There is a little one and a superior one,[2] and there is also a very little one.[3] As for the last part of the verse which is being treated, namely: "And under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone"—what was this which they saw? They beheld the precious stone with which the Holy One will build the future Sanctuary, as it is written: "I will lay thy stones with fair colours and lay thy foundations with sapphires" (Isa. LIV, 11).'

HE LAID NOT HIS HAND UPON THE NOBLES OF ISRAEL; AND THEY SAW GOD AND DID EAT AND DRINK. "The nobles of Israel" refers to Nadab and Abihu: their punishment was postponed. R. Jose declared that these words were said in praise of them, for "they did eat and drink": that is to say, they feasted their eyes on this splendour. Said R. Judah: 'It was indeed a true partaking and a true nourishing, and a most veritable and perfect uniting with the supernal world. Oh, if they only had not later sinned!' R. Eleazar said: 'Israel also at that time[4] became qualified for a revelation, and the Shekinah was united with them, and the making of the Covenant and the giving of the Torah all took place at one and the same time; and never again was such a sight vouchsafed to Israel. In the time which is to come the Holy One, blessed be He, will reveal Himself unto His children, so that they shall perceive His full glory eye to eye and face to face, as it is written: "For they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion" (Isa. LII, 8); and it is also written: "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (*Ibid.* XL, 5).'

[1] Metatron. [2] Malkuth. [3] Sandalphon. [4] The Zohar evidently adopts the view that the events recorded in this chapter (Ex. XXIV) took place *before* the giving of the Law. v. Rashi, *ad loc.*

TERUMAH

EX. XXV, 1–XXVII, 19

AND THE LORD SPAKE UNTO MOSES SAYING, SPEAK UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL THAT THEY TAKE ME A HEAVE OFFERING. R. Ḥiya, on coming to this portion, quoted the verse, "For Jacob hath chosen Jah unto himself, Israel is his costly possession" (Ps. CXXXV, 4). Said he: 'How beloved must Israel be to the Holy One, blessed be He, seeing that He has chosen them and desired to unite Himself with them and be bound up with them, making them a nation unique throughout all the world, as it is written: "Who is like unto thy people Israel, a unique people on earth?" (2 Sam. VII, 23). And they, too, have chosen Him and bound themselves up with Him, as it is written, "Jacob hath chosen Jah unto himself". [126b] Yea, for over the other nations He appointed celestial principalities and powers, but reserved Israel for His own special portion.'

R. Simeon discoursed on the text: "Who is this (*zoth*) that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as furnished with banners?" (S.S. VI, 10). He said: 'The words "Who" and "This" denote the two worlds: the "Who" symbolizing the most supernal sphere, the unknowable beginning of all things, and "This" a lower sphere, the so-called "lower world"; and these two are indissolubly linked together. When they first unite, this lower world "looks forth as the dawn" when it is striving to become bright; when they draw closer, it is as "fair as the moon" when the sun's rays beat upon her; and finally it is "like the sun", when its moonlight becomes full. It is then "terrible as furnished with banners"; yea, mighty to protect all, furnished with power from the supernal world, through "Jacob", the "complete one", who united the two worlds as one. He united them above, and he united them below, and from him issued the twelve holy tribes after the supernal pattern.[1] Jacob, who was "a man of completeness" (Gen.

[1] i.e. symbolizing the twelve permutations of the Tetragrammaton.

xxv, 27), brought harmony to the two worlds, as has been elsewhere explained.[1] Other and lesser men, however, who follow Jacob's example (in marrying two sisters) merely "uncover nakedness" (i.e. dishonour the spirit of righteousness) both above and below, causing antagonism in both worlds, and engendering separation, as it is written: "Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister in her life time to vex her" (Lev. xviii, 18). And should it be pointed out that even Jacob was not spared this enmity in wives, as we read that "Rachel was jealous of Leah" (Gen. xxx, 1), then would I answer: Surely so! and how could it be otherwise? For the whole longing and the most ardent desire of the lower world (symbolized by Rachel) is to be in all outer seeming like unto the upper world (symbolized by Leah), and to usurp its powers and reign in its stead. So not even Jacob could succeed in bringing perfect harmony into being between them. Other men, therefore (by marrying two sisters), will cause only enmity, separation and chaos, "removing the veil" from the hidden places in regard both to the world above and to the world below. "Who" and "This" are termed "sisters", because they are united in love and sisterly affection. They are also called "mother and daughter". And he who "uncovers their nakedness" shall find no portion in the world to come, nor any part in the Faith.' R. Simeon continued: 'We have a tradition that when the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world, He engraved in the midst of the mysterious, ineffable and most glorious lights, the letters *Yod*, *Hé*, *Vau*, *Hé*, which are in themselves the synthesis of all worlds both above and below. The upper was brought to completion by the influence symbolized by the letter *Yod*, representing the primordial supernal point which issued from the absolutely hidden and unknowable, the mysterious Limitless (*En-Sof*). Out of this unknowable issued a slender thread of light which was itself concealed and invisible, but which yet contained all other lights, and which received vibrations from That which does not vibrate and reflected light from That which diffused it not. This slender light in turn gave birth to another light wherein to

[1] By marrying Leah and Rachel. cf. Zohar, Genesis, 153b.

disport and to conceal itself; and in this light were woven and fashioned six impressions which are not known save to that slender light when it goes in to hide itself and shine through the other light. The light which issues from the slender light is mighty and terrible, and it expands and becomes a world which illumines all succeeding worlds—a hidden and unknown world in which dwell six myriads of thousands of supernal powers and hosts. When the worlds were all completed [127a] they were joined into a single organism, and are symbolized by the letter *Vau* (=six) when it is united with the veiled world.[1] And this is the esoteric meaning of the words, "For Jacob has chosen Jah unto himself." But when the *Vau* emerges self-contained from the *Yod Hé*, then "Israel attains to his costly possession": that is to say, to other men permission has not been granted to penetrate to the higher point (*Binah*), but only as far as the "costly possession" (*Malkuth*), which is a lower grade; and from this they can ascend higher in intention but not in actual attainment, as Jacob did.'

R. Judah connected this text with the verse: "O, how (*mah*) great is thy goodness which thou hast hidden for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!" (Ps. xxxi, 20). 'This verse', said he, 'has been well enough expounded by the Companions; but the "holy lamp" (R. Simeon) found in it one of the deepest of the esoteric lessons. The supreme grade, esoterically known as "the supernal world", is designated "*Mi*" ("Who") and the lower grade known as "the lower world" is designated "*Mah*" ("What?", "How?"), and we have been taught that "*Mah*" contains an allusion to "*meah*"—"hundred"—because all the higher grades, when fully realized, are subsumed in it. Why is the world below called "*Mah*"? Because, although the emergence of the Supernal becomes manifest in that last of all the grades to a greater degree than at any previous stage, it is still mysterious: "What seest thou? What knowest thou?" As to the words "great is Thy goodness", these connote the Foundation of the world, as in the verse, "great goodness towards

[1] *Yod, Hé.*

the house of Israel" (Isa. LXIII, 7). This is here said to be "hidden", because it has been stored away like the primordial light (which is called "good"). The verse continues: "Which Thou has wrought for those who trust in Thee". Yea, for in this Foundation is the fabrication of the whole, of all the world, of souls and spirits; this is the hidden force behind the creation of the (lower) heaven and earth, and this is also the hidden force behind the building of the Tabernacle, which was erected in the likeness both of the world above and of the world below. This is the significance of the words: "that they take me a heave offering": two grades[1] become united as one in the Tabernacle which is the emblem of that union.'

R. Simeon, R. Eleazar, R. Abba, and R. Jose sat one day under a tree in a valley by the Lake of Genessareth. Said R. Simeon: 'How pleasant is the shade of these trees! Surely the beauty and peace of this place is worthy of being crowned with some exposition of the Torah?' He then began to discourse, saying: 'It is written: "King Solomon made him a palanquin (*apiryon*) of the trees of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love by the daughters of Jerusalem" (S.S. III, 9, 10). This verse we interpret as follows. *Apiryon* symbolizes the Palace below which is formed in the likeness of the Palace above. This the Holy One, blessed be He, calls "The Garden of Eden", for He created it in order to satisfy His own ardent desire for joyous and continual communion with the souls of the righteous who have their abode there—these being those souls which have no bodies in this world. These all ascend and are crowned in that place of perfect delight, and have each their appointed places from whence they can perceive the "loveliness of the Lord", and partake of all the delicious streams of pure balsam (*aparsamon*). This *aparsamon* symbolizes the hidden Supernal Palace, whereas *apiryon* is the Palace below, which has no "stay"[2] until it obtains it from the upper Palace. [127b] Now the streams

[1] *Yesod* and *Malkuth*. [2] A play on the word *semekh*, which means both "support" and "the letter S" (*Aparsamon* = *apiryon* + the letter *samekh*).

of this *aparsamon* issue forth from the celestial sphere and the souls which have no earthly bodies ascend to imbibe from the light which emerges from them, and to revel therein. As for the souls who are clothed in bodily raiment and garmented with flesh, they ascend likewise and imbibe nourishment, but from the light of the sphere *apiryon*, for that is the region which appertains to them: which having done, they descend again. They both give and take. They emit sweet savours from the good works which they have wrought in this world, and they imbibe the aroma which was left in the Garden, and of which it is written: "as the savour of the field which the Lord had blessed" (Gen. XXVII, 27), the "field" being the Garden of Eden. And in this Garden all the souls appear, both those who dwell in earthly bodies and those whose sole being and joy is in the world above. The verse proceeds: "King Solomon made him": that is, He made it for His own glory. Should ye ask, But do not the souls of the righteous share the joy with Him? I would say, Most assuredly! For His joy would be as naught without them, since to have pleasure in their companionship is the very essence of His desire and delight. The term "King Solomon" refers to the King "to whom peace belongs"—namely, the Supernal King: and the term "king" by itself refers to the King Messiah.[1] "The trees of Lebanon" denotes those trees which the Holy One uprooted and planted in another place, as it is written: "the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted" (Ps. CIV, 16). Of these trees the *apiryon* was built. And what are these trees, the "trees of Lebanon"? They are the six primordial Days of Creation. Now each of these Days performs in this *apiryon*[2] the part which was assigned to it.

'By the first ordering, the primeval light which was afterwards stored away was taken from the Right Side and brought into the *apiryon* by means of a certain "Foundation", and performed its function therein. Afterwards the *apiryon* produced an image in the likeness of that original light, as is indicated by the words, "Let there be light, and there was

[1] v. Zohar, Gen. 29a. [2] The world of *Beriah* or "creation". v. Introduction, vol. I, p. xvii.

light" (Gen. 1, 3), the repetition of the word "light" denoting that the first light brought forth another light. This was the first day of the "trees of Lebanon".

'By the second ordering, there was drawn from the Left Side the division of waters through the stroke of a mighty fire, which entered into this *apiryon* and performed its function therein, dividing between the waters of the Right Side and those of the Left; and afterwards the *apiryon* brought forth an image in the likeness thereof. This was the second day of the "trees of Lebanon".

'By the third ordering, there was drawn from the sphere of the centre and the Right Side a certain third day which made peace in the world and from which were derived the seeds of all things. This performed its function in the *apiryon*, and brought forth various species, herbs and grasses and trees. Its likeness was left there, and the *apiryon* brought forth similar species, and this was the third day of the "trees of Lebanon".

'By the fourth ordering, the light of the sun was kindled to illumine the darkness of the *apiryon*, and it entered therein to give light, but did not perform its function till the fifth day. The *apiryon* produced in the likeness thereof, and this was the fourth day of those "trees of Lebanon".

'By the fifth ordering, there was produced a certain movement [128a] in the waters, which laboured to bring forth the light of the ordering of the fourth day, and it performed its function in the *apiryon* and brought forth various species; and all remained in suspense until the sixth day, when the *apiryon* brought forth all that was stored in it, as it is written, "Let the earth bring forth living creature after its kind, etc." (Gen. 1, 24). This was the fifth day of the "trees of Lebanon".

'The sixth ordering was the day on which the *apiryon* came into completion, and apart from that sixth day of Creation it can have neither completion nor life-energy. But when that day was at length arrived the *apiryon* was completed, with many spirits, many souls, many beautiful virgins,[1] privileged to abide in the Palace of the King. In the

[1] The *Hekaloth*.

completion of this day the previous five days are completed also, and the upper and lower spheres are perfectly united in friendship, in joy, and in one ardent desire for the companionship of their King. Thus was the *apiryon* sanctified with supernal sanctifications and crowned with its crowns, until finally it was exalted with the Crown of Rest and was designated with a noble name, a name of holiness, to wit, Sabbath, which presages rest and peace, the perfect harmonization of all things both above and below. That is the significance of the words, "The King Solomon made him an *apiryon* out of the trees of Lebanon." He who is worthy of this *Apiryon* is worthy of all things, is worthy to repose in the peace of the Holy One's shadow, as it is written: "I sat down under his shadow with great delight" (S.S. II, 3). And now, as we ourselves here sit under the shadow of this peace, it behoves us to observe that we really abide in the shadow of the Holy One, within that *Apiryon*, and remain for ever there: and we must crown this place with supernal crowns, so that the trees of that *Apiryon* may be induced to cover us with a shade yet more comforting.'

So they began to discourse upon holy and supernal matters. R. Simeon first spoke, saying: 'It is written: "They shall take me a heave offering: on the part of everyone whose heart is willing ye shall take my offering." "They shall take Me." This signifies that he who aspires towards piety and fellowship with the Holy One, blessed be He, must not be lax or remiss in his devotion, but must be ready and willing to bring sacrifices according to his strength: "according as the Lord God hath blessed thee" (Deut. XVI, 10). True, it is written, "Come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa. LV, 1), and this in reference to work on behalf of the Holy One. But this only indicates that, whereas knowledge of the Holy One and of His Torah can be acquired without price or fee, the doing of good works for the sake of Heaven requires sacrifice and must be "paid for" with full price; otherwise the doer is not worthy to draw down unto himself the spirit of holiness from above. In the book of sorcery from which Ashmedai taught King Solomon, it is written that he who desires to remove from himself the

spirit of impurity and to subdue that spirit, must be prepared to pay in return for the fulfilment of his wishes whatever is demanded. For the spirit of impurity tempts the heart of man with many allurements, in order to take up its abode with him. But the spirit of holiness is not so: it demands a full price and strenuous effort, purification of one's self and one's dwelling, devotion of heart and soul; and even so one will be lucky to win it to take up its abode with him. Therefore one must beware and walk straitly according to the paths and ways of righteousness, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left; for otherwise, even if it had entered into a man, it will straightway depart from him, and thereafter it will indeed be passing hard to recall it again. Hence the expression, "Let them buy ("*lakah*" also means "to buy") unto Me". OF EVERY MAN: from everyone deserving the name of "man", that is, from everyone who prevails over his evil inclination. "That giveth it willingly, with his heart"—namely, [128*b*] he with whom the Holy One is well pleased, for He—the Lord—is Himself the "Heart", as it is written: "My heart said to thee" (Ps. XXVII, 9); "the rock of my heart" (*Ibid.* LXXIII, 21). So also here, "Ye should take me a heave offering from him with whom I am well pleased", for there alone can the acceptable sacrifice be found, and in no other place soever. And how may one recognize a person with whom the Holy One is pleased and in whom He has His abode? When we observe that a man endeavours to serve the Holy One in joy, with his heart, soul and will, then we can be quite sure that the Shekinah has Her abode in him. Such a man is worthy to be well paid for his teaching and companionship. Therefore the ancients said: "*Buy* thee a companion" (i.e. teacher). [1]Buy him for a good price, in order to merit the Shekinah's presence. Therefore also one must pursue and run after the sinner and "buy" him for a good price, in order that the filth of sin may be purged away from him and the spirit of impurity, the emanation of the "other side", be subdued. He who succeeds in redeeming such a sinner can justly consider himself the "creator" of the renewed and quickened soul,

[1] Pirke Aboth, I, 6.

and such an act is the greatest praise (of God) imaginable, and it exalts the glory of the Holy One, blessed be He, more than any other circumstance or deed imaginable. Why so? Because by his action in turning the sinner from wickedness he helps to bring into subjection the "other side". Therefore it says of Aaron: "And he turned many from sin" (Mal. II, 6), and hence, "My covenant was with him, life and peace" (*Ibid.* 5). See now. He who seeks a sinner takes him by the hand, and induces him to give up his evil way, such a one is elevated as none other can be, yea, even with three particular deserts, namely by his causing the "other side" to be subdued, by magnifying the glory of the Holy One, and by sustaining, through the merit of his good works, the very equilibrium of the worlds, both the upper and the lower spheres. Concerning such a man it is written: "My covenant was with him: life and peace." He will be worthy to see his children's children; he is worthy to enjoy this world and the world to come, and none of the lords of judgement shall retain any power whatsoever over him to chastise him, either in this world or in the world to come. He will pass through twelve gates (of the firmament), and none will hinder him. Concerning such a one it is written: "His seed shall be mighty upon earth, the generation of the upright shall be blessed . . . His righteousness endureth for ever. Unto the righteous there ariseth light in the darkness" (Ps. CXII, 2–4).

'In a certain Upper Chamber there are three colours which burn in one flame. The flame emanates from the South, which is the Right Side. The three mysterious colours which compose this flame proceed in three separate directions: one goes upward, one down, and one flickers, appearing and disappearing when the sun shines. The colour which ascends is the first to appear. It is of a whiteness more dazzling than any known. It enters into the flame and is a little absorbed into it, though without losing its identity. It rests upon the top of that Chamber, and when the Israelites enter the synagogues and pray, as soon as they are arrived at the end of the *Geulah* (Redemption) prayer—namely, at the words, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who redeemest Israel" and go straight on to the *Amidah* prayer—

the white and lucent colour descends upon the top of the Chamber and weaves a crown of the prayers of the people; and a herald rises in the Heavenly courts and proclaims: "Blessed are ye, holy people, for that ye perform (make) good (*tob*)[1] before the face of the Holy One, blessed be He!" This is the inner significance of the words, "I have done what is good in thine eyes" (Isa. XXXVIII, 3): namely, that King Hezekiah connected by his devotions "Redemption" with "Prayer". For when the praying people have reached the words "praises to the supreme God" (in the last hymn before the "Eighteen Benedictions") and the white brightness rests, as we have said, upon the top of that Chamber, the *Zaddik* is aroused to join the appropriate Place in love and joy, and all the "limbs" are united as one in one desire, the higher with the lower, and all the celestial lights sparkle and glow with divine supernal fire, and all are united in this Righteous who is designated "Good", as it is written, "Say ye to the righteous that he is good" (Isa. III, 10). And He unites them all in the silence of perfect joy, and kisses of friendship; and everything is united in the Chamber. And when the worshippers arrive at the prayer "Grant abundant peace" (at the end of the "Eighteen Benedictions"), the "River that goes out of Eden" does his service in this Assembly and all must take leave from the King, and no human being nor any other created thing may thereafter be found in that Presence, nor may any petitionary prayers be prayed then, [129a] but one must "fall upon the countenance" (say propitiatory prayers). Why? Because that time is the time of service, and every being that dwells upon the earth must stand abashed before his Lord, covering his face in great awe, and let his soul join the service of the souls which are contained in that Chamber. Then the colour which descends hovers over the lower part of the Assembly, and another herald appears, like unto the first, and he cries with a loud voice: "Ye upper and lower beings! Bring witness of him who, by reclaiming sinners becomes a 'maker of souls', that he deserves to be crowned and is worthy to enter now into the presence of the King and the Matrona, because the

[1] Here a synonym for the Sefirah, *Yesod* or *Zaddik*.

King and the Matrona enquire after him!" Then two witnesses who are among the number of the "eyes of the Lord which run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zech. IV, 10), and who stand behind the curtain, emerge therefrom and testify, saying: "We testify indeed for that man." Blessed is his lot, for on his account his father shall be blessed and remembered into good, because he has re-made souls in the earthly sphere—souls even of sinners who had been captured by the "other side". Thus is the glory of the Holy One exalted in perfect joy. Then an angel appears who is the storekeeper of the celestial figures of the righteous, and this angel's name is Jehudiam because of his office ("over the people of the Jews") and he is crowned with a crown on which is engraven the Holy Name. The Holy One makes him a sign and he comes forward, bearing the image of the man who has reclaimed souls of sinners, and places it before the King and the Matrona. And I bring heaven and earth to witness that at that moment they deliver to him that figure; for there is no righteous person in the world whose image is not engraved in heaven under the authority of that angel. Seventy keys also are delivered into his hand—keys of all the treasures of the Lord. Then the King blesses that image with all the blessings wherewith He blessed Abraham when he reclaimed the souls of sinners. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, gives a sign to four groups of supernal beings, who take that image and show it seventy hidden worlds of which none are worthy except those who have reclaimed the souls of sinners. If only the sons of men knew and perceived what rewards follow the endeavours of the righteous to save sinners, they would assuredly run after them with the same ardour with which they run after life itself. A poor man's benefactor gains many good things, many supernal treasures, because he helps him to exist; but even he cannot be compared to him who endeavours to save the soul of a sinner. For the latter causes the breaking of the power of the "other side", of the "other gods"; he is the cause of the Holy One's exaltation on His Throne of Glory. He gives the sinner a new soul. Happy indeed is his lot!

"The second colour, which is both hidden and revealed,

appears in its full glory at the moment when the Israelites are arrived at the *Kedushah* (Sanctus) of the Order of Prayer,[1] for this is the sanctification which the children of Israel pronounce over and above those uttered by the supernal angels whose associates they are. This colour shows itself all the time that Israel are pronouncing that sanctification in order to defend the Israelites from the angels, who otherwise would take note of them and call down punishment upon them from above. Then a herald appears and proclaims with a loud voice: "Ye who are above and ye who are below, remove all such as are haughty because of their learning!" For we are taught that man must be humble in this world in regard to his knowledge of the Torah; only in the future world is the pride of learning permitted. In this *Kedushah* we must be on guard and hide our knowledge in quietness among ourselves,[2] more than in those which we say in company with the angels.[3] In one of these we praise those self-same angels, and for this they permit us to pass through the upper gates. Also we recite it [129b] in the holy language (Hebrew); for this reason, too, they permit us to pass through the heavenly gates; and by means of the next sanctification we enter into still higher gates. It might be said that we deceive the angels by thus praising them. But this deception is permissible, for the heavenly angels are holier than we, and are able to derive and imbibe greater stores of holiness, and were we not to have an extra sanctification we would be unable to associate with them in any fellowship or communion of praise, and the glory of the Holy One, blessed be He, would so be prevented from coming into completion throughout both the upper and lower spheres at one and the same time. Therefore we endeavour to make ourselves their associates, in order that the glory of the Holy One, blessed be He, may be exalted in all the spheres. The *Kedushah* which comes at the end[4] is in Aramaic, and this may be recited even by an individual—that is privately—but the Hebrew words

[1] The *Kedushah* which occurs in the prayer, "And a redeemer shall come unto Zion." [2] By saying it in Aramaic. [3] The *Kedushah* in the benediction, "Fashioner of light", and the *Kedushah* in the *Amidah*. [4] In the prayer, "And a redeemer shall come unto Zion."

of the *Kedushah* proper, which is in Hebrew, must only be recited in a congregation of ten persons or more, because the Shekinah unites Herself with the holy tongue, and all sanctifications with which the Shekinah is connected can be uttered only in the presence of at least ten persons, for it is written: "And I shall be sanctified in the midst of the children of Israel" (Lev. XXII, 32). The term "children of Israel" further implies that such a sanctification must be in the holy tongue, which is Israel's, the other nations speaking other languages. It may be objected: "Why, then, must the *Kaddish*, which is in Aramaic, be recited only in the presence of ten persons?" The answer is, that the sanctification expressed in the *Kaddish* is unlike the sanctification of the thrice-repeated "Holy, Holy, Holy", for this prayer, the *Kaddish*, ascends into all sides and all spheres both above and below, and to every side of Faith,[1] and breaks down iron walls and weighty seals and all the shells[2] and defences of evil, so that by its merits the glory of the Holy One, blessed be He, is more greatly exalted than through any other prayer, because it causes the power of the "other side" to wane and its empire to decline; and therefore it must be said in Aramaic, which is the language of the "other side", and one should respond in a loud voice and with a firm spirit: "Amen, May His great Name be blessed", in order that the power of the "other side" may be quelled and the Holy One be exalted in His glory above all things. And when the power of the "other side" is thus vanquished and broken by the power of holiness expressed in the *Kaddish*, then the Holy One is exalted in glory and remembers His children, and remembers His Name. So because of His exaltation this prayer must be recited in the presence of ten. Blessed for ever is the holy people to whom the Holy One gave the holy Torah in order that they might be made worthy, by her aid, of the world to come.'

Then R. Simeon turned to the companions and said: 'Ye are worthy of the world to come; therefore, because we have begun to discourse upon matters concerned with the Crown of the supernal Kingdom, I shall continue to speak on your

[1] i.e. the *Sefiroth*. [2] The *k'lifoth*.

behalf in regard to the same subject, and the Holy One will assuredly reward you in the sphere of that Kingdom. And the breath of your mouths will ascend into heaven, as if ye yourselves had stirred up these words.' Then he continued, saying:

'AND THIS IS THE OFFERING WHICH YE SHALL TAKE OF THEM: GOLD AND SILVER AND BRASS. This verse applies both to the higher side, the side of holiness, and to the lower, the "other" side. Observe that when the Holy One created the world, He began to create from the side of silver, that is, Mercy, which is the right side, because that silver was above; but in the work of the Tabernacle, which was built according to its prototype (the universe), He began His creation from the left side and then proceeded to the right side, because the Tabernacle was from the left side.

'It is written: "Morning and evening and at noon will I pray and cry aloud" (Ps. LV, 17). We have referred on another occasion to this verse. It speaks of three seasons for prayer, and the companions have interpreted the significance of the three times in the following way. "Evening" is the mirror which has no radiance, "morning" the radiant mirror, while "noon" is symbolic of a place which should properly be called "darkness", because it adjoins the evening, only it is designated by the very opposite by a certain elegance of language, just as, on occasion, black [130a] is called white, while sometimes white is called black; we read, for instance, of Moses' wife that she was black (Num. XII, 1), and Israel are compared to the Aethiopians (Amos IX, 7). The evening prayer is not obligatory, and there is no fixed time for it, because the evening is influenced by the "other side", which is dark and rules by night. The limbs and fatty portions of sacrifices used to be burnt on the altar in the evening, and from that moment numbers of groups of demons which issue and have sway by night receive their nourishment. It may be said, have we not been taught that the messengers of the "other side", of the spirit of impurity, had by rights no power in the Holy Land, and so if by this means the Israelites were to rouse them, would they not be doing something forbidden? The answer would be that the smoke of those

parts was wont to ascend, not as the smoke of other sacrifices, which did ascend in a straight line heavenward: for these fumes rose and dispersed into a cavern in the North, where dwell all the hosts of evil spirits, and when the smoke arose, as we have said, as it floated upward in a crooked line towards that place, all those malevolent beings would feed on it, and so would remain where they were, dispersing not throughout the earth. One particular evil spirit was appointed over the others in that northerly cavern: his name was Synegoria,[1] and when the smoke began to ascend crookedly and to draw near, he and sixty thousand myriads of other spirits would rise up to meet it in order to imbibe nourishment therefrom. They would stand within their cavern and then pass through the door called "*keri*" (lit. defilement). It is to this door that there is an allusion in the words, "If ye walk contumaciously (in *keri*) unto me, then will I also walk contumaciously unto you" (Lev. XXVII, 24, 25); that is, the wrath and anger which come out from that door called *Keri* will be wreaked on those who walk contumaciously. These are the spirits who roam about by night. When the souls of the righteous emerge from the earth into the upper spaces in order to ascend heavenward, these same spirits also appear and contend with them, in order to prevent them from reaching and entering their heavenly habitation and rest. And, indeed, they bar the way to all save only the souls of the most supreme saints, which break through all firmaments and æthers until they reach the highest sphere. The demoniac hosts speak lying words to the children of men, disguising themselves in other forms, and seducing them till they defile themselves. But at the time when the limbs and the fat of the offerings were burnt, the smoke provided them a full repast of the kind suited to their station, and being busy with this they forgot to come forth and roam about the Holy Land. Now the evening prayer, as I have said, is not obligatory, because these bands of demons participate in the dominion of the night, and only Jacob was able to fix it. However, although the evening prayer is not legally obligatory, yet it has a protective

[1] Lit. "advocacy, justification". Perhaps a corruption for *Sangorin* (from *sanguis*), "bloodthirsty".

influence against the terrors of the night, against the fear of Gehenna, for at night the wicked receive a punishment double that which is executed upon them by day. Therefore the Israelites introduce the evening prayer for weekdays with the verses: "And he is merciful, he forgiveth iniquity, and destroyeth not: yea, many a time he turneth his anger away, and doth not stir up all his wrath" (Ps. LXXVIII, 28). This is recited because of the fear of Gehenna. But on Sabbath, when there is no fear of the punishment of Gehenna nor of any judgement, one may not recite these verses lest he thus awaken the evil spirits, causing them to appear and become active. To counteract the fear of the accuser and slanderer of souls we conclude the *Hashkibenu* prayer ("Cause us, O Lord, to lie down in peace") with the words: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who guardest Thy people Israel for ever. Amen". To counteract the fear of the many devils and accusers which are present in the night and have power to injure anyone who leaves his house at that time, we say: "Guard our going out and our coming in unto life and unto peace." From the fear of all these things we deliver in trust our bodies, souls and spirits to Heaven above, to the Supernal Kingdom which has dominion over all of them. Therefore we recite every night the evening prayers, performing all this to counteract the mysterious influences of the evil spirits now that there are no sacrifices to keep them at bay. At midnight, when the north wind awakens, it beats against all the abodes of those malevolent spirits, cracking in twain a gigantic mighty rock, the stronghold of the "other side", and rushes about everywhere, both above and below; and all [130*b*] the evil demons return to their places, for their power is then broken and they have no influence. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, enters the Garden of Eden to have joyous fellowship with the righteous, as has been related before. When morning comes, the light of the lamp which rules the midnight hours hides before the light of the day. The morning has now full sway and dominion and the reign of the night is past. This is the morning of primæval light, the morning which sheds beneficence throughout all the worlds. From it all celestial and terrestrial beings imbibe

nourishment. It waters the Garden with supernal dews. It guards the whole Universe. Here is a mystery which is entrusted to "those who know the measures" of things spiritual. He who has to set out on a journey in the morning should rise at break of day and at a certain specially ordained moment turn and look towards the east. He will then behold a kind of letters which break through the surface of the sky, some ascending and some descending. These are flashed forth from those letters with which the heavens and the earth were created. If the watcher is cognizant of the mystery of the letters which form the mystic Holy Name of forty-two letters, and if he should in this hour be mindful of them with devout intent, with a loving heart, then will he behold in the luminous heaven six *Yods*, three upon the right side and three upon the left; also three *Vaus*, which ascend and descend and sparkle in the firmament. These are the number of the initial letters of the words of the priestly blessing. He should then say his morning prayers and set forth upon his journey, because, verily, the Shekinah Herself goes before him; happy is his lot! When morning arrives, a mysterious pillar appears in the South, in that portion of the firmament beneath which the Garden of Eden is stretched: this is a different pillar from the one which is in the midst of the Garden. The pillar set in the South flashes with the brightness of three colours, purple-woven. On that pillar there is a branch, on which three birds sit, chirping hymns of praise. One begins: "Hallelujah! Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the Name of the Lord!" The second then takes up the chant thus: "Blessed be the Name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore." Then the third sings: "From the rising of the sun until the going down of the same the Lord's Name is to be praised" (Ps. CXIII, 1–3). Then a herald proclaims: "Prepare yourselves, O ye supernal saints, who sing praises to your Lord! Prepare yourselves for the praisegiving of the day, when day separates itself from night! Happy is the lot of him who rises in the morning from the praise of the Torah which has engrossed him in the night watches." Then it is time for morning prayer.

'It is written: "The burden of Dumah. He calleth to

me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night ? Watchman, what of the night ? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: If ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come" (Is. XXI, 11). This verse has been explained in references to Israel's exile in Seir (i.e. Edom = Rome). Israel says to the Holy One: "Watchman, what of the night ?" meaning, "What will become of us in this exile, which is like the darkness of night ?" Says the watchman, namely, the Holy One: "The morning hath come once (in the Egyptian exile) when I made My light to shine unto you, when I liberated you, when I ordained you for My service, when I gave you the Torah in order that you might achieve eternal life, but ye have forsaken My Torah", and therefore came also the "night" of this present exile. If ye will inquire from "the book of the Lord" (*Ibid.* XXXIV, 16) and read therein, ye will find there the reason and cause of your exile and the means of redemption. If you so inquire there, the Book will call upon you, "Return with a perfect repentance and come near to Me". A more esoteric explanation is as follows. First, in regard to the word "burden", it should be noted that there were six grades in the divine revelation to the prophets: "appearance" (*maḥzeh*), "vision" (*ḥazon*), "revelation" (*ḥezyon*), "aspect" (*ḥazuth*), "word", and "burden". The first five aspects are all like unto the vision of one who beholds a reflection of light from behind a wall, and some of them are as the vision of one who sees the light of the sun through a lantern. But "burden" signifies that the light came with great difficulty, and was barely revealed. Here it was even a "burden of silence" (*dumah*), for which no words could be found. "He calleth to me from Seir." It does not say who calleth whom—whether the Holy One calls to the prophet, or the prophet to the Holy One. But there can be no doubt that the prophecy hints at the secret of faith, and that the faithful prophet is recording how the voice of the mystic object of faith called to him, to wit: "He calleth to me *out* of Seir". [131a] Similarly it says elsewhere: "And he rose up *out* of Seir to them" (Deut. XXXIII, 2), not *to* Seir, the reason being that the mystic object of Faith is contained in grades within grades, each more recondite than the other;

shell within shell, brain within brain. We have referred to this fact in regard to the vision of Ezekiel: "A whirlwind came out of the North, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof the likeness of four living creatures" (Ezek. I, 3–5). Grades within grades, as we have said. In the same manner the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to Israel: "He came from Sinai"—this was the most hidden grade of revelation; "He rose up from Seir unto them"—this was a second, a more open revelation, the shell nearest to the brain; "He shined forth from Mount Paran"—this was still another aspect of revelation. Then it says, "He came with ten thousands of holy beings" (cf. Deut. *ibid.*). This is the highest praise, that, although He revealed Himself in all these grades, yet the commencement of the revelation was from the place which is the root of all, to wit, "the thousands of holy beings"—the last supernal grade. So here, "Seir" is the grade cleaving to the highest. The "watchman" mentioned here is Metatron, the ruler of the night. It is written: "Watchman, what of the night (*laylah*) ? Watchman, what of the night (*lail*) ?" What is the difference between *laylah* and *lail?* They are one and the same, only in one part of the night the "other side" reigns and in the other it has no such sway; "*lail*" requires guarding, therefore it lacks the letter *hé* at the end, it is the early part of the night before midnight, "the night (*lail*) of watchings" (Ex. XII); from midnight on it is "*laylah*" (cf. Ps. CXXXIX, 13). "The watchman" here is Metatron, who said: "The morning cometh"—the morning prayer which rules the night. One must not suppose that it comes by itself, the male being so separated from the female, for it says, "And also the night": not so, for they are perpetually together and are never separated. And the voice proclaimed this: "The morning cometh and also the night." "Both are prepared for you. From now on if ye would pray your prayers, in supplication before the Holy King—do so. Return to your Lord, and come !" Even as a father is prepared to receive his prodigal children and to have mercy on them, the Holy One,

morning and night, calls unto His children, saying: "Come!" Happy is the holy people whose Lord seeks them and beckons them to come unto Him. Because of that honouring and favour the holy people must unite and come to the Synagogue; and he who comes first unites himself with the Shekinah in one bond. Indeed, blessed is he who is found first in the Synagogue, for he stands in the grade of "Righteous" along with the very Shekinah Herself. This is the inner meaning of the words, "Those who seek me early will find me" (Prov. VIII, 17). He indeed reaches a high degree. But, it may be objected, we have been taught that when the Holy One, blessed be He, enters a Synagogue and finds there less than the ten requisite male persons, He is angry; how, then, canst thou say that the one who comes first is united with the Shekinah and is in the grade of "Righteous"? The following parable will explain. A King issued an order to the citizens of his capital, to meet him one and all at a certain place and at a certain time. While the rest were still making ready, one hastened to present himself at the appointed place. Then the King came and found him waiting. He asked him where the rest of the citizens were. The man answered: "My Lord King, I, as thou seest, have arrived first, but my fellow-townsmen are upon the road and will soon be here as well, according to Your Majesty's command". This pleased the King, and he entered into conversation with the man and became quite friendly with him. In the meantime [131*b*] the others arrived and the King received them graciously and sent them away in peace. Now had no man been swift and prompt to obey the command of his lord, and to inform him of the near approach of his neighbours, would not the King have been much wroth? Similarly, when the Shekinah comes and finds in the Synagogue one person who has arrived there before anyone else, it is to Her even as though all were indeed present, for the Holy Shekinah joins company with him and together they wait for the others to come, that the prayers may be started. She becomes closely acquainted with him, and promotes him to the grade of "Righteous". But if no one had come in time, she would have said, "Why, when I came, was there no man?" (Isa.

L, 2); and note that it does not say "there were no *ten* men," but "no man", meaning, "There was no one man waiting to unite himself with Me and become My companion and friend, to be a 'man of God' in the grade of Righteous." Moreover, if one day the favoured man is missing, She is greatly concerned, and makes inquiries about him, as it is written: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant . . . ?" (Isa. L, 10). As we have pointed out, "His servant" is Metatron, who calls from "Seir" to men to repent and pray. Therefore, as we have said, he who comes early to the Synagogue merits the grade "Righteous".

'When morning comes and the congregation is assembled in the Synagogue, service must begin with hymns and psalms of David. We have already made clear that the purpose of the liturgy is to stir up Mercy and Lovingkindness both in the higher and lower range, to bring into being redemptive acts, and to awaken joy; and this was the essential significance of the Levitic service, namely to awaken love and joy above by means of song and praise. Woe unto him who engages in conversation of a secular nature in the Synagogue, for he causes separation, he weakens the Faith. Woe unto him, for he has no part in the God of Israel, since by his lack of awe before the Divine Presence he as much as denies the reality thereof, contemning the influence of the power which comes from above. For when Israel is occupied with the singing of psalms and hymns of praise and with prayer, three groups of supernal angels also assemble. One consists of holy beings who praise Him in the day-time—for there are also those who praise Him at night—in company with the Israelites; the second group consists of those holy angels who are always present in the midst of Israel at every *Sanctus*, and who have sway over all those celestial beings who are roused by Israel's sanctifications here below; the third celestial host is composed of those "virgins" whose office is to be maids of honour to the Shekinah, and to prepare Her to meet the King. These are the most supreme groups of angels, who join the worshippers in their singing of the Psalms of King David. When the Israelites have ended their singing of the

Psalms of David, they sing the song of Moses ("The Song of the Sea"). Why do the Psalms of David come before the Song of the Sea? Does not the "written Torah" (the Pentateuch) take precedence of the Oral Law, and even of the Prophets and the Writings, of which latter the Psalms form a part? The reason is that just because of its importance above all other hymns and because the Community of Israel cannot be perfected except by means of the written Torah, [132a] it must be recited in close proximity to the prayer said when seated. At the hour when the Song of the Sea is recited the Community of Israel is crowned with the crown wherewith the Holy One, in the time that is to be, will crown the King Messiah. That crown is engraved with Holy Names, those same Names which glittered as crowns of fire upon the head of the Holy One Himself on the day when Israel crossed the Sea and Pharaoh and his hosts were drowned therein. Therefore that song must be recited with special devoutness, and he who is able to recite this hymn in the present world will be found worthy to behold King Messiah in the hour of His crowning and to sing then this song of redemption. All this is beyond dispute.

'When the *Yishtabaḥ* hymn is reached, the Holy One takes this crown and sets it before Him, and the Community of Israel prepares herself to meet her King. She must be attended by the thirteen attributes of the Divine Mercy wherewith she is blessed. These are the thirteen aspects of praise, enumerated during the course of that hymn: song, praise; hymn and psalm; strength and dominion; victory, power and greatness; adoration and glory; holiness—these together make twelve, and unto these is added *Malkuth*—sovereignty—which is the thirteenth, and whose office is to unite all the rest in one bond, for it (Sovereignty) receives blessings from the others. Because of these things the worshipper must concentrate his whole mind upon these thirteen attributes, and be careful not to disturb their sacred unity by conversing between the lines of the hymn. Anyone who should so disturb that unity by secular talk causes a flame to emerge from under the wings of the Cherubim, which cries out with a mighty voice: "Here is a man who has cut

short the praise of the Holy One's majesty! Let him be himself cut short, so that he should not behold the glorious majesty of the Holy King!" as it is written: "And seeth not the majesty of the Lord" (Isa. XXVI, 10). For those thirteen attributes are the majesty of the Lord. From then on He is "the God to whom thanksgivings are due" (a part of the above hymn). He is the supernal King to whom perfect peace belongs; for all these praises come from the Community of Israel here below, a "song of songs" directed towards "Solomon" (*Shelomoh*), namely to the King to whom peace (*shalom*) belongs.

'Then follows the *Yoẓer* benediction: "Blessed art Thou . . . who formest light, and createst all things", the initial letters of the words of one verse of which contain the twenty-two letters of the Alphabet, the small letters, that is—for there are large letters and small, of which the small ones represent the Divine activity in the lower world, and the large ones the world to come. . . . [133a]

'It is written: "And she (the Shunammite) said unto her husband, Behold now, I know that this is an holy man of God which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber on the wall, and let us set before him a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick" (2 Kings IV, 9, 10). Here we have an allusion to the order of prayer. "Behold now, I know" refers to the concentration of mind during prayer; "that he is an holy man of God" refers to the supernal world which sitteth upon its Throne of Glory and from whence emanate all sanctifications and which sanctifies all worlds; "passeth by us continually" with the sanctification wherewith the worlds above are nourished, he also sanctifies us here below, for there can be no completion of the sanctification above without sanctification below, as it is written: "I shall be sanctified in the midst of the children of Israel" (Lev. XXII, 32). Therefore, "let us make a little chamber": let us have an ordered service as a stay for the Shekinah, who is called "wall", as in the verse, "And Hezekiah turned his face to the wall" (Isa. XXXVIII, 2). This stay created by our prayers and praises consists of a bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick. By our evening prayers we provide Her with a

bed; by our hymns of praise and by reciting the section of the sacrifice in the morning we provide Her with a table. By the morning prayers, which are said sitting, and with the proclamation of the Divine Unity (the Shema), we provide Her with a stool; and by means of those prayers which must be said standing (*'Amidah*) and of the *Kaddish* and *Kedushah* prayers and benedictions we provide Her with a candlestick. Blessed is the man who thus endeavours daily to give hospitality to the Holy One. Blessed is he in this world and blessed shall he be in the world to come. For these four groups of prayers equip the Shekinah with beauty, joy and lustre, to greet Her Spouse with delight and ecstasy day by day, through the worship of the holy people. The "bed" was given to Jacob to prepare, therefore he ordered the evening prayer; the "table" was prepared by King David in the Psalms which he wrote ("Thou preparest a table before me" (Ps. XXIII, 5)); the "stool" was prepared by Abraham, through his close union with the Lord, wherewith he benefited the souls of all the sons of men. The candlestick [133*b*] was prepared by Isaac, who sanctified the Name of the Holy One before the eyes of the whole world, and lighted the supernal light in that sanctification. Therefore the Holy People must direct its mind towards the supernal world, and prepare for the Lord of the House a bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick, in order that perfection and harmony may reign undisturbed every day, both above and below.

'At the time when Israel is proclaiming the unity—the mystery contained in the Shema—with a perfect intention, a light comes forth from the hidden supernal world, which divides into seventy lights, and those seventy lights into the seventy luminous branches of the Tree of Life. Then the Tree and all the other trees of the Garden of Eden emit sweet odours and praise their Lord, for at that time the Matrona prepares Herself to enter under the shade of the canopy, there to unite herself with her Spouse; and all the supernal potencies unite in one longing and one will to be united in perfect union, without any separation soever. Then the Spouse makes ready likewise to enter the Canopy in order to unite Himself with the Matrona. Therefore we proclaim

loudly: "Hear, O Israel; prepare thyself, for thy Husband has come to receive thee." And also we say: "The Lord our God, the Lord is one", which signifies that the two are united as one, in a perfect and glorious union, without any flaw of separation to mar it. As soon as the Israelites say, "The Lord is One", to arouse the six aspects, these six unite each with each and ascend in one ardour of love and desire. The symbol of this is the letter *Vau* (because its numerical value is six) when it stands alone without being joined to any other letter. Then the Matrona makes herself ready with joy, and adorns herself with delight, and Her attendants accompany Her, and in hushed silence She encounters her Spouse; and Her handmaids proclaim, "Blessed be the Name of the Glory of His Kingdom for ever and ever." These words are said in a whisper, for so she must be introduced to her Spouse. Blessed is the people which perceives these things, ordering its prayers in accordance with this mystery of the Faith! At the time when the Spouse is united with the Matrona a herald comes forth from the south, crying: "Awaken, O ye supernal hosts, and unfurl the banners of love in honour of your Lord!" Then one of the leaders of the celestial array—he whose name is *Boel* (God is in him)—stands forth, and in his hands are four keys which he obtained one from each of the four corners of the earth. One key has upon it the sign of the letter *Yod* engraved; the second the letter *Hé;* and the third the letter *Vau;* and these three keys he lays beneath the boughs of the Tree of Life. Then these three become one. Then the fourth and last key, which bears upon it the second letter *Hé*, joins the three which have become one. And all the angelic hosts enter by means of those keys into the Garden of Eden, where with one voice they proclaim the Divine unity at the selfsame moment as it is proclaimed here below. Then the Shekinah, the Bride, is conducted to the Palace of the King, Her Bridegroom, for now He stands complete in all His supernal goodness and can supply Her with all that She needs. Thus her attendants bring Her in unto Him in silence. Why in silence? In order that no "stranger" (evil potencies) should participate in her joy. As He united Himself above according to six aspects,

so also She unites Herself below according to six other aspects, so that the oneness may be completed, [134a] both above and below, as it is written: "The Lord will be One, and his Name One" (Zech. XIV, 9): Six words above—*Shema Israel YHVH Elohenn YHVH eḥad*, corresponding to the six aspects, and six words below—*baruk shem kebod malkuto le'olam waed* (Blessed be the Name, etc.)—corresponding to the six other aspects. The Lord is one above; and His Name is One below. We say this reponse silently, although it is a triumphant expression of the Oneness, because of the "evil eye", which still has power under the present dispensation; but in the future (Messianic Age) when the "evil eye" will have ceased to exist and will have no dominion whatsoever over this world, then we shall proclaim the Divine Unity and its full accomplishment openly and in a loud voice. At present, as the "other side" still cleaves to the Shekinah, She is not entirely One, and therefore, although even in this present time we proclaim the unity, we do so silently, symbolizing it by the letters of the word *wa'ed* (ever), which are equivalent by certain permutations to those of the word *eḥad* (one). But in the time that is to be, when that other side shall be removed from the Shekinah and pass away from the world, then shall that unity be proclaimed openly. When She enters the canopy and is united with the Supernal King, then we awaken the joy of the Right and of the Left, as it is written: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart", etc. —that is, without any fear or foreboding, because the "other side" comes not near and has no power here. But whilst Her servants are bringing Her to the King they must keep a great and solemn silence. Of this Jacob is symbolic. Before his death, when he was about to speak of the "end of days" (and the Shekinah left him) he said to his sons: "Perchance some stain is attached to me or to my seed ?" But they replied: "Nay, there is no such stain, nor is any fault found. Thine own heart is possessed only by the One, and as for us—we have no contact with the 'other side' or any of its evil minions; on the contrary we, like thyself, are united with the King alone, since all our will and intent has been to separate from the 'other side'." Then Jacob said: "Blessed be the

Name of the glory of His Kingdom for ever and ever." In that hour Jacob and his sons became for a space, as it were, living portraits here on earth of the Shekinah Herself. Jacob symbolized the six sides of the supernal world as a single whole, and his sons were shaped to the likeness of the six aspects as manifested in the lower world. Now he desired to reveal to them a certain "end", for, as we have pointed out elsewhere,[1] there is one "end of days" (*kez ha-yamin*), which refers to the Holy Kingdom, the mystery of Faith, the mystery of the King of Heaven; and another "end of days" (*kez ha-yamim*), [134b] which is the mystery of the Guilty King, the "other King", ruler of the powers of darkness, and that end is called "the end of all flesh". Now when Jacob perceived that the Shekinah was withdrawing from him, he questioned his sons, as we have pointed out. And as Jacob and his sons proclaimed the union of the world above and the world below, so also must we. Blessed is he who concentrates his mind and will, with true humility and longing, upon this mystery. Blessed is he in this world and blessed shall he be in the world to come !' Said R. Hamnuna the Ancient: 'This stirring up of the unity has indeed been rightly and justly expounded, and that which we have just now heard is indeed very true; and in the future time these words which we have now uttered will stand before the Ancient of Days and in no wise be abashed.'

He then began to expound this passage as follows. ' "They shall take Me a heave offering." Here we have displayed an inclusive union of the above with the below, for it does not say "They shall take a heave offering", but "They shall take Me a heave offering", which denotes a fusion of the upper with the lower spheres.[2] "On the part of everyone whose heart is willing ye should take my heave offering." The words "on the part of" seem at first sight to be superfluous, but in reality they contain a deep lesson for the masters of the esoteric lore. Blessed are the righteous who have learnt how to centre all their thoughts and desires on the Heavenly King, and whose aspirations are directed, not towards the vain and foolish toys of this world and its lusts, but to attaching

[1] Zohar, Genesis, 62b. [2] i.e. *Tifereth* with *Malkuth*.

themselves wholeheartedly to the world above in order to draw down the favour of the Lord Himself from heaven to earth. What is the place whence they receive this favour? It is a holy supernal region, whence emanate all holy wills and desires. This is known as "every man", who is identical with the "Righteous", the Lord of the House, whose love is always directed towards the Matrona, like a husband who loves his wife always. "Whose heart is willing": that is, His heart goes out to Her, and Her heart to Him. And although their mutual love is so great that they never separate, yet "ye shall take from Him My heave offering", meaning, "ye should take the Shekinah to dwell with you". The Holy One, blessed be He, unlike a human husband, [135a] who would protest violently should anyone take from him the wife whom he so dearly loves, is greatly pleased when the Shekinah, whom He so loves, is "taken" from the supernal sphere, the abode of Love, to dwell below in the midst of Israel. Happy is the lot of Israel and happy that of all those who are worthy of this. In that case, it might be asked, why does it say, "which ye should take from them" instead of "from Me"? Because the "from them" refers to these two Divine names or grades. Rabbi Yeba the Ancient suggested that *meitam* (from them) signifies *méét M*, from the sphere designated by the letter M; the mysterious sphere, the abode of the Righteous One, from whence He draws life to distribute to all the worlds. It is all one mystery, which has been entrusted to the wise. Happy is their lot! However, although they "take" Her (the Shekinah), they may do so only when her Spouse specially grants permission, and only in accordance with His will, in order that He may be worshipped in love. This is realized daily in the corporate liturgical services of Israel. Or "from them", again, can refer to the six supernal grades; or to the Seasons and Sabbaths. It amounts all to the same thing.

GOLD AND SILVER, AND BRASS, AND BLUE AND PURPLE, AND SCARLET, AND FINE LINEN, AND GOATS' HAIR, AND RAMS' SKINS DYED RED, AND SEALSKINS, AND ACACIA WOOD. Gold symbolizes New Year's Day, the day

of "gold", because it is a day of judgement, and the side of judgement, symbolized by gold, dominates it; as it is written, "gold cometh from the north" (Job XXXVII, 22), and "evil will be opened from the north" (Jer. VI, 2). Silver symbolizes the Day of Atonement, when the sins of Israel are made "white as snow" (Isa. I, 18), for "on that day shall he make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord" (Lev. XVI, 30). Brass is symbolic of the days of the Sacrifices of the Feast of Tabernacles, which alluded to the powers and principalities of the heathen nations, who are designated "mountains of brass". "Blue" (*techeleth*) corresponds to Passover, which established the dominance of the true object of Faith, symbolized by the colour blue, which could predominate only after the punishment of the firstborn of Egypt was accomplished. So all colours seen in dreams are of good omen, except blue. "Red-purple" (*argaman*) is connected with Pentecost, symbolizing the giving of the written Law, consisting of two sides, of the Right and of the Left, as it is written: "From his right hand went a fiery law unto them" (Deut. XXXIII, 2). "Scarlet" (*tola'ath shani*) is connected with the fifteenth day of Ab, a day on which the daughters of Israel used to walk forth in silken dresses. So far six symbolic elements have been enumerated; the rest symbolize the Ten Days of Repentance:[1] fine linen, goats' hair, rams, skins dyed red, seal (*tahash*) skins, acacia wood, oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the incense, beryls and set jewels. These are nine, corresponding to nine days of Repentance, and the Day of Atonement completes it and makes ten days.

'From all of these we take "the heave offering of the Lord"[2] on each of these special seasons, in order that it may rest upon us: on Passover by means of the paschal lamb, on Tabernacles by means of the tabernacle, and so forth. The six Days are but a preparation for her. As they are united above in "One", so she is unified below in the mystery of "one", to correspond to them above. The Holy One, blessed be He, who is One above, does not take His seat upon the

[1] From New Year to the Day of Atonement. [2] *Malkuth*.

Throne of Glory, until She has entered within the mystery of the One in accordance with His very essence of Oneness, to be the One in One. This, as we have said, is the significance of the words: "The Lord is One, and His Name is One." It is the mystery of the Sabbath, which is united with the mystery [135*b*] of the One so that it may be the organ of this Oneness.

'In the prayer before the entrance of the Sabbath the Throne of Glory is prepared for the Holy Heavenly King. And when the Sabbath arrives the Shekinah is in perfect union with Him and is separated from the "other side", and all the potencies of severe judgement are severed from Her, She being in closest union with the Holy Light and crowned with many crowns by the Holy King, and all the principalities of severity and all the lords of judgement flee from Her, and no other domination reigns in any of the worlds, and her countenance is illumined by the supernal light, and she is crowned here below by the Holy People, all of whom are invested with new souls. Then is the time for the commencement of prayer, when the worshippers bless Her with joy and gladness, saying, "Bless ye the Lord, the Blessed One!" (the beginning proper of the Sabbath Eve prayer). For the holy people cannot be allowed at this moment to begin with a verse that suggests judgement, as on weekdays, when "Bless ye" is preceded by "And He being merciful, forgiveth iniquity and destroyeth not", because the Shekinah is then entirely severed from the mystery of the "other side" and all the lords of judgement have separated themselves and passed away from Her, and he who rouses judgement in the lower spheres causes vibrations of doom and severity also in the celestial regions, and while this disturbing element is in evidence the Holy Throne cannot crown itself with the crown of holiness. Then the lords of judgement who have severed themselves for the time being from the rest of creation, hiding themselves away from all eyes in a deep and secret recess at the bottom of the sea, are roused to return to the celestial habitations, and they come back with violence and fury, so that the Holy Sphere, which requires above all rest and peace for the entrance of the Sabbath, is hard

pressed by these potencies of judgement. So it is evident that we should not imagine that She (the Shekinah) is independent of our "rousings", for there is no vibration above of any sort but is caused by those which take place in the midst of Israel below, as we have already pointed out in connection with the expression "in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day"; it is not merely *a* feast day, but *our* feast day; that is to say, we effect a movement in the higher spheres by our prayers. Therefore the holy people, who are crowned with holy crowns of souls in order to awaken rest and peace above, may not order judgement there, but, on the contrary, must all consciously and with exceeding great love awaken blessings both above and below.

'The congregation respond: "Blessed is the Lord who is blessed for ever and ever." The expression "who is blessed" indicates the streaming of blessings from the source of life to the place whence issue nourishment and bounty for all creatures. And why do we call this source "blessed"? Because it sustains and waters *'olam va'ed* (lit. for ever and ever), which is the Sabbath eve. In this way blessings are transmitted to this *'olam va'ed* from the highest world, so that it attains its full perfection. Thus in this benediction, "blessed" represents the ultimate source whence all blessings emanate;[1] "the Lord" is the centre[2] of all the supernal sides; "who is blessed" represents the peace of the house, the fountain of the cistern,[3] providing completion and nourishment for all, while "for ever and ever" refers to the world below,[4] which needs these blessings: the "good oil" of "blessed", "the Lord", and "the Blessed One" is all for this *'olam va'ed*. Therefore the whole congregation has to recite this every day; but on Sabbath eve it must be recited with special devotion and gladness, in order that the Sabbath may be fitly blessed by the holy people. When they begin to recite this benediction a voice is heard in all the heavens that are sanctified by the entrance of the Sabbath: "Blessed are ye, holy people, for that ye bless and sanctify on earth below, that thereby many supernal holy hosts [136*a*] may be blessed and sanctified above." Blessed are they in this world and

[1] *Hokmah.* [2] *Tifereth.* [3] *Yesod.* [4] *Malkuth.*

blessed are they in the world to come. The Israelites do not recite this benediction until they are crowned with the crowns of holy souls, as we have said before. Blessed is the people who is worthy of them in this world, so that it may merit them in the world to come. This, to the pious, is the night of conjugal unions, when they are thus crowned with new souls and new additional holy spirits, for, being in a state of supernal holy tranquillity, they may then beget holy children.

'Here now is a mystery entrusted to the wise. At midnight on this night the Holy One is pleased to enter the Garden which is above. On weekdays at this time He enters the Garden of Eden which is below, in order to have joyous communion with the righteous who have their abode there; but on Sabbath He enters the Garden above. For on weekdays all the souls of the righteous abide in the Garden which is on the earth; but on Sabbath eve, all those hosts of holy angels who are appointed over the Lower Paradise bring up from that region the souls which dwell there into the firmament which is close to this Garden, where many holy chariots of fire await their coming, that they may escort these souls to the Paradise above, and bring them before the Throne of Glory. Whilst these souls are thus ascending, other souls are descending in a similar manner to become crowns to the holy people below. So their activity proceeds, some ascending and some descending. Do not, however, imagine that on this account the Paradise on earth remains empty and untenanted upon the Sabbath. Far from it! For, as we have said, while some souls go, others come, to wit, those souls who are being cleansed and purified during the six days of the week, but who are not yet sufficiently perfected to be able to abide in Paradise permanently, but on the Sabbath are permitted to enjoy its delights for a space, so that the place is never empty. This is symbolized by the removal and replacing of the "shew bread" (*v.* Leviticus XXIV, 5–9). Again, do not imagine that when the souls return to their earthly Paradise at the end of the Sabbath they find it so overflowing with other souls that no place remains for them; for their abode becomes by some mysterious process much larger, being

extended both in length, width and height, so that their presence makes no difference. There are also some souls which, having ascended to the highest sphere, never come down again. And in addition there are also those who ascend and descend continually to crown the holy people. In fact, on the Sabbath eve there is a veritable commotion of souls coming and going, ascending and descending. As for the innumerable holy Chariots which perpetually speed hither and thither, eye can scarce behold them for their radiant and glittering aspect! All the souls are full of joy and eagerness to become crowns for the holy people on earth, for the righteous in the lower Paradise. At last comes the moment when a voice proclaims throughout all the spheres: "Sanctified! Sanctified!" Then there is peace everywhere, perfect peace, even to the wicked in Gehenna, and all the souls crown themselves, some above, and some below. On Sabbath, at midnight, when the wise consummate their conjugal unions, at the time when they are sleeping peacefully in their beds, and their souls are eager to ascend and behold the glory of the King, the supernal spirits with which they crowned themselves at the sanctification of the Sabbath take those souls and bring them up unto the heights. These souls are there bathed in the spices of Paradise, and behold all that is within their capacity to behold. Then, when it is time to descend again, the supernal spirits accompany them until they reach safely their human habitations. [136*b*] It is incumbent upon the wise to recite certain verses calculated to arouse that supernal holy spirit of the Sabbath coronation, as, for instance: "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; for the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, etc." (Isa. LXI, 1); or, "Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels" (Ezek. I, 20), in order that the act of procreation may be effected in a spirit of Sabbath holiness, through the influence of the supernal Sabbatic spirit.'

When R. Hamnuna the Ancient used to come out from

the river on a Friday afternoon, he was wont to rest a little on the bank, and raising his eyes in gladness, he would say that he sat there in order to behold the joyous sight of the heavenly angels ascending and descending. At each arrival of the Sabbath, he said, man is caught up into the world of souls. Happy is he who is aware of the mysteries of his Lord ! And when the Sabbath day itself lightens, a spirit of tranquil joy ascends through all worlds. This is the significance of the Psalm (recited on Sabbath morning): "*The heavens tell the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.*" 'What is meant by "Heaven" ? That heaven in which the Supernal Name is made visible (*shama-yim*—heaven; *shem*—Name). What is the meaning of the word "tell" (*mesaprim*) ? Assuredly not the mere telling of a tale. Far otherwise ! It signifies that they are illumined from the flashing of the supernal Point and ascend in the Name which is contained in the light-stream of the supernal perfectness. They flash and lighten of themselves through the lightening and flashing of the Supernal Book;[1] they lighten and flash towards all the sides which are attached to them, and each sphere retains unto itself a little of this light, for from that sapphire-like radiance every ring in the chain derives its light and radiance. For upon this day (Sabbath) the heavens are crowned and ascend in the power of the Holy Name more than on any other day. "His handiwork" is the supernal Dew which streams forth from all the hidden regions; it is "the work of His hands", and His self-fulfilment wherein He completes and perfects Himself on this day more than upon any other. This dew "streams down" (*maggid* in the Aramaic sense) from the Head of the King, with an abundance of blessing, the "firmament" here signifying the stream issuing from the Cistern, the "River which went out of Eden", which flows earthwards, as the stream of the Supernal Dew which gleams and flashes from all sides. This "firmament" draws it downward upon a current of love and desire, in order that it may water the field of bliss and joy at the entrance of the Sabbath. When that fair pearled Dew streameth down, the whole becomes full and complete in

[1] *Hokmah.*

its holy letters acting through all their holy channels; since all is united to it, a path is opened to it to water and bless all below. "Day unto day"—one day to another, one ring or sphere unto its fellow. Here Scripture speaks in detail concerning the manner in which the heavens radiate sapphire brightness to that Glory, and how that "Firmament" of the supernal Dew causes the downward flow of the current. "Day unto day utters speech." Day unto day, grade unto grade, in order that the one should complete itself in the other, and one be illumined by the other from the luminous and sparkling radiance of the Sapphire which is reflected by the heavens back to the central glory. The word *yabia'* (uttereth) can be translated "hasteneth": they hasten to catch the light and the flashing one from another. The word *OMeR* (speech) indicates the letters and paths which proceed from the Father,[1] the Mother,[2] and the head which issues from them, who is the firstborn Son.[3] *Aleph* symbolizes the Father, and when it ascends and descends, the *Mem* unites itself with it, producing *em*, which signifies Mother; the *resh* is the Head (*rosh* =head), signifying Son. When these three unite the result is that they form "Word", "Speech". Thus the Father, the Mother, and the first born Son radiate one within the other in one union, which has its reign and duration upon the Sabbath. Thus all are united so as to become one, and therefore they hasten one to another that *Omer*, as a supernal reign, in order that all should be one. But when all has been conveyed down to that "firmament", then it diffuses light upon the "Glory of God" below that it may produce beings in the likeness of [137a] the heavens which give light to that Glory. "And night unto night declareth knowledge." These are those "chariots" which form the body of the Throne; they are called "nights", as it is written: "My reins also instruct me in the nights" (Ps. XVI, 7). The upper chariot is called "Days" or "day unto day", the lower "Nights", or "night unto night". *Ye-ḥawe* (declares) may also mean "makes alive", to wit, produces the progeny of the heavens, "brings unto life" generations. "Knowledge" designates the mystery of the

[1] *Hokmah.* [2] *Binah.* [3] *Tifereth.*

heavens: as the heavens have six sides, so also the generations which they bring into life in their likeness. Thus "day unto day" is included in a supernal sphere called "Word" (*omer*), and "night unto night" in the mystery of the Male, who gives light to her and whose name is "Knowledge". And because this "Word" is not like other words, but is a supernal mystery, Scripture comes back to it and says: "There is no word (*omer*) nor speeches, their voices are not heard" (v. 3). This "word" is a supreme mystery of supernal grades, where there are no voices nor speech, and which cannot be understood like the other grades which constitute the mystery of the Faith, and which are voices that can be heard. And yet "Their line is gone out through all the earth" (v. 4), although they are supernal mysteries which can never be perfectly comprehended, yet the current of their flow is downward. Because of this current, we have a true Faith in this world, and all mankind can discourse of the mystery of the Faith of the Holy One in connection with these grades, as if they were revealed to and not hidden from them. Therefore it says: "And their words to the end of the world" (*Ibid.*), which means that from the beginning to the end of the world the "wise of heart" discourse of those hidden grades although they cannot be comprehended. And how far are they comprehended ? "In them hath he set a tent for the sun" (*Ibid.*), because the holy sun[1] is as a tabernacle of all those supreme grades, and is as a light which has taken into itself all tne hidden lights and the whole current of their extension, whereby Faith is manifested in the whole world. To grasp the Sun is equivalent to grasping all grades, because the sun is a "tent" including all and absorbing all; and he in turn lights up all the shining colours below. Hence "He is a bridegroom coming forth from his canopy (covering)" (v. 6), in the gleam and flash of those hidden lights which in strong yearning and desire give him tokens of their love, as to a bridegroom to whom all his friends give presents and gifts. And what is "his covering" ? Eden, the "covering" which covers up all things. "He rejoiceth" from the side of the primeval light in which judgement has no place at all. "As a

[1] *Tifereth.*

strong man" (*gibbor*)—from the side of "strength" (*geburah*); and note that it does not say here "a strong man", but "*as* a strong man", which means that Judgement is tempered by Mercy. Thus the sun gathers all together in one, in perfect devotion and love. "To run on the way", in order to nourish and complement the Moon on every side and make it possible for her to shed her light downwards. "His going forth is from the end of the heaven" (v. 7). He goes forth from the end of that supernal heaven, from the termination[1] of the Body, as it is written, "From one end of heaven to the other end of the heaven" (Deut. IV, 32); where the "one end" designates the upper world, and the "other end" its termination. "And his circuit unto the ends of it" (*Ibid.*): he (the sun) runs through all those holy regions that are capable [137b] of being vivified and nourished by his rays. "And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof" (*Ibid.*): nothing is hidden from that radiance, for it is directed towards all together, to each according to its capacity of reception. When all are thus completed and vivified by the Sun, then the Moon is crowned in the likeness of the supernal perfect Mother in fifty gates. This is expressed in the following verse: "The Torah of the Lord is perfect, quickening the soul"; as she is perfect from all sides in the mystery of five grades, in the likeness of the supernal Mother, to whom belongs the mystery of the fifty. Therefore the Torah is introduced here in six parallel sentences of five words (in Hebrew) each, in order to complete the mystery of fifty. "The Torah of the Lord is perfect, quickening the soul" is five. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" is five. "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart" is five. "The commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes" is five. "The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring for ever" is five. "The judgements of the Lord are true, righteous altogether" is five. All these sentences present themselves in five words each, after the semblance of the supernal Mother; six times, as the Tetragrammaton is mentioned in these verses six times, corresponding with the six supernal grades which form the mystery of the supernal

[1] *Yesod.*

heaven. So the Moon is completed in the realm of transcendence into that which it should be, and all this on the Sabbath day, upon which all is perfected in the mystery of the Sabbath above and below. On this day, therefore, radiance is increased everywhere. The heavens receive it from the source of life; and they then impart light and completeness to the supernal Glory from the mystery of the supernal Numberer (*Sopher*), the Father of all; then from the mystery of the Numbered (*Sippur*)—the Supernal Mother; finally from the mystery of the Number (*sepher*).[1] Therefore it says: "The heavens declare" (*mesaprim*), namely, as we have pointed out, in the mystery of these three Names which, on the Sabbath, reign supreme more than on other days. Therefore David uttered this Psalm of praise, through the Holy Spirit, in regard to the light and the effulgence of the Sabbath and its pre-eminence over the other days of the week because of the mystery of the Supernal Name which in it lightens up and radiates and sparkles in the spheres of holiness, and is completed above and below.

Therefore the "Men of the Great Synagogue" have ordered that this Psalm of David should be the first one to be sung on the Sabbath day, since it refers to those particular "Heavens" which lighten all the others. Then follows (in the liturgy) that "river which goes out of Eden", alluded to in the Psalm which follows this one in the Sabbath service: "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous" (Ps. XXXIII); for this "River" gathers into itself the whole mystery of the "heavens" and the source of life on this day, and the sun is perfected for its appointed task of the distribution of light. Then the Moon, when she separates herself from the "other side"—as on this day she does—in order to receive light from the sun, is alluded to in the Psalm following this one, namely (Ps. XXXIV): "Of David, when he changed his behaviour towards Abimelech." When the "other side" has separated itself from the "Moon", then the latter is united with the "Sun", and therefore this Psalm begins (acrostically) with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, signifying the merging of the Sun with the Moon. Then

[1] *v. Sefer Yezirah.*

follows the union of the Matrona with Her Spouse: "A prayer of Moses, the man of God" (Ps. XC): He spreads out both His right and His left hands to receive Her and to unite Himself with Her in perfect union. Then follow other psalms of joy and ardent longing. "A psalm. Sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand and his holy arm hath wrought salvation for him" (Ps. XCVIII). This Psalm has been expounded elsewhere, and the Companions were perfectly correct in their assertion that it was chanted by the kine [138a] who bore the sacred ark.[1] This corresponded to the mystery above: when the "living beings" (*Hayoth*) lay hold of the Throne in order to raise it to the highest heights, then we sing this Psalm. As to the question, why, then, is it called "new" when it is perpetually being repeated, the fact is that it is indeed a "new song" because it refers to the "new" moon at the time when she receives light from the sun. "His right hand and his holy arm hath wrought salvation for him": this denotes the rousing of the right and the left hand to receive Her (the Moon, signifying the Shekinah) when She arrives at "Beth Shemesh", the "House of the Sun", which hands receive and bear Her even as the kine bare the ark. This psalm of praise was therefore ordered to be chanted on the Sabbath by the "one people", namely the children of Israel. (Ps. XCII): "A song. A psalm for (to) the sabbath day. It is good to praise the Lord, to sing unto thy name, O most high. To proclaim thy lovingkindness in the morning and thy faithfulness in the nights." It has been established by the Companions that this hymn of praise was sung by the first man (Adam) after he had been driven out of the Garden of Eden, when the Sabbath drew nigh unto the Holy One and interceded for the created being. Then he sang this hymn in honour of the Sabbath which had delivered him. It is a hymn of praise sung by the world below to the world above, to a world which is altogether "Sabbath", the sphere of the "King whose is the peace". It is a hymn of the sabbath below unto the Sabbath above: the sabbath below, which is like night, sings to the Sabbath above, which is like

[1] *v.* Zohar, Genesis, 123*a*.

day. In fact, whenever "Sabbath" is mentioned it refers to the "eve of the Sabbath" (i.e. the Shekinah), but when it says "the Sabbath day", it denotes the Supernal Sabbath (i.e. *Tifereth*). The former is symbolized by the Female, the latter by the Male. Thus "And the children of Israel should keep the Sabbath" (Ex. XXXI, 16) alludes to the Female, which is the night (*layla*), and "remember the Sabbath day" (*Ibid.* XX, 8) alludes to the Male. Thus the sabbath here below sings a hymn to the Sabbath above. Therefore this psalm is anonymous, as we find everywhere where there is a reference to the world below (the Shekinah) that the Name is not actually mentioned, as, for example, "And he called unto Moses" (Lev. I, 1), "And to Moses he said, go up to the Lord" (Ex. XXIX, 1). Since in this psalm reference is made to a higher sphere, therefore the divine name is not applied to the lower grade, just as a candle cannot shine in the sunlight. All the hymns sung in praise of and on the Sabbath are the aids to its ascension to supernal regions where it is crowned with supernal holy crowns above all other days.

'The Sabbath service continues with the prayer: "The soul of all living shall bless thy name, O Lord our God." The Companions have made some true observations on this prayer.[1] But the real truth is that on Sabbath it is incumbent on us to mention that soul[2] which emanates from "the Life of Worlds" (*Yesod*). And since this soul belongs to Him from whom all blessings proceed and in whom they are present, who wills to water and to bless that which is below, she is given permission to bless this Place. Thus the souls which fly forth from this "Living One" on the entrance of Sabbath do actually bless that Place in order to communicate blessings to the world below which is called the "Lower Name" (*Malkuth*). At the same time, the region whence those souls emanate blesses the Name from above, and so it receives blessings from below and from above, and is completed in all aspects. During other days she receives blessings from those souls which bless her from below; but on the Sabbath she receives blessings from those supernal souls which bless

[1] Zohar, Exodus, p.205*b*. [2] The "additional soul" given to the Israelite on Sabbath.

her with forty-five words according to the numerical value of the word *Mah* (What ?) From the words "the soul of all living" to "the God of the first and last ages" there are forty-five words; from the words "were our mouths filled with song as the sea" to the words "and with us" are very nearly fifty words, corresponding to the *Mi*[1] (numerical value = fifty). From here on follow other praises which resolve themselves in the number one hundred, the completion of all (to "the great God") and form one chariot. [138*b*] Thus this hymn of praise and all the words contained in it are numerical symbols of the perfection of the Sabbath, and the perfection attained through it, according to the Divine purpose. Blessed is that people that has learnt how to conduct a service of praise in well-pleasing fashion ! From here on follow prayers proper (connected with the Shema and the Amidah).

' It is written: "But be not thou, O Lord, far from me; my Hind (*eyaluti*), haste thee to help me" (Ps. XXII, 20). These words did King David speak in that hour when he ordered that hymns of praise should be sung to the King, so that the unity of the Sun and the Moon should be accomplished. While he composed these praises, he said: "But be not thou far from me". The combination of "Thou" and "Lord" signifies the mystery of the one inseparable union. "Be not far": this refers to Her (the Shekinah) when she ascends to be crowned by her Spouse in the world above, and from thence to ascend still higher into the Infinite, to be united there, high, high, above. Therefore it says: "be not far", that is to say, do not ascend to such heights that will leave us without Thee. Therefore through this service of praise Israel seek to attach themselves closely to the Shekinah and her Glory, so that if this Glory should seek to rise aloft they may still cling to it and not allow it to abandon them. Therefore, also, the prayer proper (*Amidah*) is recited quietly, as one would speak confidentially with a King; for as long as Israel holds Him in confidential converse He cannot depart from her, leaving her alone. "My hind": even as the hind and the gazelle, though they flee to a far distance, yet soon

[1] For the symbolic meaning of *Mah* and *Mi*, v. Zohar, Genesis, 1*b*.

return again to the place from which they went, so also the Holy One, blessed be He, even when He ascends into the unscalable heights of infinity, soon returns. Why so ? Because Israel here below cling to Him, and being so attached to Him do not allow Him to forget them and abandon them. This is the significance of the prayer, "My hind, haste Thee to help me." Therefore it behoves us to cling to the Holy One,blessed be He, in order so to speak to draw Him down from the heights, so that we should not be deserted by Him for an instant. Therefore, when we pass quickly from the *Geulah* (Redemption) benediction to the Prayer (*Amidah* or eighteen benedictions) we must, as it were, lay hold on Him, and lead Him apart, and converse with Him privately and in a still voice, in confidence, so that He should not depart far from us and leave us alone. Concerning this it is written: "And ye who cleave to the Lord your God, ye are all alive to-day" (Deut. IV, 4); "Blessed is the people who is in such a case; blessed is the people who has the Lord for its God" (Ps. CXLIV, 15).'

Having reached this point, R. Simeon rose and the Companions likewise, and they walked away from the tree in the valley. Said R. Eleazar unto R. Simeon his father as they journeyed on: 'Father, up to this point we have been sitting in the shadow of the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. Hereafter we must assuredly walk in the ways which guard this Tree.' R. Simeon replied: 'Begin thou first, while we are yet upon the way !'

R. Eleazar then explained to them the symbolic significance of colours and metals in connection with the Tabernacle. 'Gold is mentioned first because it is the emblem of the lower Power, or the Left Hand. Silver, which, on account of its whiteness, signifies Mercy, or the Right Hand, although it comes second here, is nevertheless the essential hue as regards the mystery of the Divine attributes in their manifestation to Israel, as it is written, "Mine is the silver and mine is the gold" (Haggai II, 8). It is also represented by the "cup of benediction" (the cup drunk after a meal) which, although it is taken up with both hands, is actually held only with the right hand. This is the esoteric meaning

of the words "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me" (S.S. II, 6). Shining polished brass is a colour resembling gold, combining the colours of both gold and silver. Hence the "brazen altar was too small' (1 Kings VIII, 64), because it symbolized the "smaller light which rules by night", while the golden altar symbolized "the greater light to rule the day" (Gen. I, 16). Hyacinth (purple-blue), [139a] which was used for the fringes, also denotes "judgement", or the Throne from which the judgement concerning capital offences is proclaimed. Therefore all colours seen in dreams are of good omen, with the exception of purple-blue, which denotes that the soul of the dreamer is being judged and the body is in danger of extermination. Much ardent prayer for mercy is needful to avert this portent. This colour symbolizes the Throne, concerning which it is written: "And above the firmament . . . was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a *sapphire* stone . . . and it had brightness round about" (Ezek. I, 26–27). Because the fringes are made of a material of this colour, when the morning light begins to shine on them, they become greenish-blue like a leek, and from that moment the time of the recitation of the Shema begins.[1] For this reason capital cases may not be tried at night because that colour, blue, reigns, which has the power to snatch away souls without Judgement, since Judgement does not rule at that time. When morning comes and the Right Hand is roused, the brightness appears and reaches the dark blue, and then it becomes connected with another Throne. From this moment on it is time to recite the Shema. *Argaman* (reddish-purple) is a mixture of colours uniting as one. *Tolaat shani* (prop. worm of deep scarlet) symbolizes Israel: for as the worm's power to destroy exists only in its mouth, so does Israel's power lie in her mouth (i.e. prayer); and *shani*, being used in the plural (Prov. XXXI, 21), signifies that two (*shne*) colours are united to form one. It issues from the supernal Throne which rules over the dark blue from the right side, it is white and red, right and left. It represents Michael, the guardian of Israel (Dan. X, 21). "Fine linen", of six threads, symbolizes "Tarshish"

[1] *v.* T. B. *Berachoth*.

(Gabriel). With these, two other are united: "goats' hair and rams' skins reddened": "goats' hair" denotes the lower outside power which protects (covers up) the inner power. All this is necessary and a place must be allowed for all, because they come from the sphere of gold (judgement); "rams' skins reddened", drawn from the two sides, left and right, to protect in another place. "And *taḥash* (seal) skins": there is a species of this animal which flourishes on the "other side", in the wilderness and not in cultivated places, and this species is ritually "clean" and is the one here called *taḥash*. The "acacia wood" symbolizes the Seraphim, for the word "standing" is applied to both of them (Ex. xxvi, 15; Isa. vi, 2). Then comes "oil for the candlestick", symbolizing the Holy Spirit. "Precious stones and stones to be set for the ephod and for the breastplate." These are holy stones, the foundation of the Sanctuary in holy chariots. They were set apart in the resplendent garments, for the High Priest to look upon and to remind him of the twelve Tribes. For that reason there were twelve stones, as has been pointed out.

'There are thirteen things enumerated apart from the stones, which, taken altogether, make twenty-five [139*b*] in the supernal mystery of the union. Corresponding to these twenty-five, Moses chiselled twenty-five letters in writing the mystery of the Shema (the twenty-five Hebrew letters contained in the verse, "hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one"). Jacob wished to express the unity below and did so in the twenty-four letters of the response to the Shema: "Blessed be the Name of His glorious Kingdom for ever and ever." He did not bring it up to twenty-five because the Tabernacle was not yet. But as soon as the Tabernacle was completed and the first Divine utterance was pronounced there, it contained twenty-five letters, to show that the Tabernacle was after the supernal pattern, as it is written, "And the Lord spake to him out of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Lev. i, 1—twenty-five letters in Hebrew). Thus the twenty-five things for the Tabernacle show forth the Sanctuary as a perfect and harmonious whole in accordance with the mystery of the twenty-five letters, as thou, our Master, hast taught us. This is the mystery of the completeness of

the whole Tabernacle and of everything appertaining to its construction. The number twenty-five corresponds with the twenty-two letters of the Alphabet, along with the Law, the Prophets and the Writings, which all form one whole sum and one mystery. When the Israelites proclaim the Unity, expressed in the mystery of the twenty-five letters of the Shema and in the twenty-four letters of the response, and each person in the congregations is doing this with devoutness, then all those letters unite as one and ascend as one unity. Then the forty-nine gates are opened which signify the mystery of the Jubilee. And when the gates are opened, the Holy One, blessed be He, regards each of such persons as though he had fulfilled the whole Torah—the Torah which can be viewed from forty-nine aspects. So it is necessary to concentrate heart and mind on both the twenty-five and the twenty-four letters and to raise them with the whole force of intention to the forty-nine gates, as we have said. Through concentration on this, one will concentrate on the Unity, for our Master has taught us that the "Hear, O Israel" and the "Blessed be the Name" are the summary of the whole Torah. Happy the lot of him who thus concentrates, for verily these contain the Torah in its entirety, above and below. It is the mystery of the complete Man, Male and Female, and is the secret of the whole Faith. In the debates in the schools of Shammai and of Hillel concerning the recitation of the Shema, the former held that the evening "Shema" should be recited in a reclining or resting position, and the morning "Shema" should be recited standing, their reason being that in the evening the Feminine aspect is included in the active energy and reign, while in the morning the Masculine aspect reigns exclusively in the supernal world, and it is therefore necessary to recite the Shema standing, as is done during the Prayer (Amidah) and at all times when the Masculine predominates. The school of Hillel, on the other hand, made no such distinction. If the said aspects (Male and Female) were each entirely by itself, it might be necessary to do so, but as we, by our concentration and intention, unite them in our consciousness during the recitation and response, in the forty-nine aspects,

and raise them towards the forty-nine gates, we need not emphasize their separateness, but should rather concentrate on the fact that they are both one without any separation whatever: the Masculine in six words—"Hear, O Israel, etc.", and the Feminine in six—"Blessed be the Name", etc. And the rule is always according to the school of Hillel.'

R. Simeon lifted up his hand and blessed his son R. Eleazar. He then began to speak on the verse: "Who stirred up from the east him whom righteousness called to his foot?" (Isa. XLI, 2). 'This verse', he said, 'has been variously interpreted, but, esoterically considered, "Who" refers to the mystery of the supernal world,[1] from whence the first revelation of the mystery of Faith is manifested, as we have already pointed out. Or again, the "Who" denotes that which is concealed, the absolutely impenetrable and undisclosed, and which begins to make its glory known from the region that is called "East", from which region the whole mystery of the Faith and light commences to be revealed. "Righteousness" reveals the Supernal Power and the reign of the Holy One, blessed be He, who delegates to that Righteousness authority to rule over all the worlds, to guide them and lead them towards perfection. For this reason does it go on to say: "Gave nations before him and made him rule over kings", [140a] since all the kings of the world are under the authority of that "Righteousness", as it is written: "And he will judge the world in righteousness" (Ps. XCV, 13). Moreover, when it says "Righteousness calleth to his foot", the question is: Who calleth whom? The answer is that "Righteousness" calls to the resplendent mirror, which is ever bright and refulgent, as it is written: "Keep not thou silence, O God; hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God" (Psa. LXXXIII, 1). Now the Holy One has let His light shine upon us on our way for the sake of my son Eleazar, who called down the supernal light upon us, and it has not waned. Happy is the lot of the righteous in this world and in the world to come.'

Then R. Abba discoursed on the text, "A psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah" (Ps. LXIII, 1). 'Why', he said, 'is this psalm different from all others in

[1] *Binah.*

that it alone mentions the place in which it was composed? However, this is not the only psalm where a particular motive for its composition is given. The superscription of one psalm runs: "Where he changed his behaviour before Abimelech" (Ps. XXXIV); and another (LIV) has: "When the Ziphim came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?" The purpose of these headings is to proclaim the merit of David, showing that even when he was in distress and fleeing from his enemies he sang praises to the Holy One, blessed be He. True, it was the Holy Spirit that spoke through him, but had not David yearned continually for the Holy Spirit, it would not have rested upon him. It is always thus: the Holy Spirit will not descend upon a man unless he, from below, moves it to come. And David, as we have seen, in the greatest tribulation did not cease to sing hymns and to praise his Lord for all things. If I should be reminded of the difference between "A psalm of David" and "Of David a psalm", the former, as in the passage just discussed, signifying that the Holy Spirit gave the initiative, then I would say, be that as it may, if David had not prepared himself for the reception of the Holy Spirit, it would not have come upon him. "A psalm": this means the Holy Spirit. Why is it called so? Because it continually praises the Supernal King without ceasing. When David came, the Holy Spirit found a "body" properly prepared, and so was able to sing through him in this world praises to the King, so that this world might be perfected to harmonize with the world above. "Of David"—David, a complete, perfected, worthy man who never changed. "When he was in the wilderness of Judah": as we have said, although he was in great trouble, he sang praises. And what was the burden of his song? "O God, thou art my God: I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." "God" in a general sense; "*My* God" expresses David's individual grade of experience. In fact, there are three grades here: "God", "My God", "Thou". Yet, even though there are three designations, there is really only one grade, as all allude to the mystery of the Living God: "God" is the

supernal One, the Living One; "My God" denotes His omnipotence "from one end of the heaven to the other end"; and "Thou" expresses the personal grade of David's awareness of this Presence. But, although all are one and are designated by one name, yet *ashaḥreka* (lit. I will seek Thee), may also be rendered (with allusion to *shaḥar*, black), "I will strengthen the light which shines darkly (the Shekinah)," for this does not shine until it is strengthened from below. And he who thus strengthens it becomes worthy of the white light, the light of the "refulgent mirror", and of the world to come. This mystery is expressed in the words: "And those that seek me (*meshaḥrai*) shall find me" (Prov. VIII, 17), namely those who, out of the blackness of the dawn, prepare a light. The double *n* in *yimẓaunni* ("they shall find me") signifies that they will merit the two lights: the dim, blackish light of dawn and the white light of day: or, the mirror that is not refulgent and the mirror that is. Hence David said in effect: "I will prepare a light from the blackish dawn in order that the white light of day may shine on it." "My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee": as a starving man longs for food and drink. "In a dry and thirsty land, where no water is": in the desert, a place where holiness cannot dwell. [140*b*] And we, Master, hunger and thirst for thee in this place; and as David longed to "behold God in holiness", so we long to drink in the words of the Master in his sanctuary (house of study).' Said R. Simeon to R. Abba: 'Let him who began continue.'

Then R. Abba spoke on the verse: "And they shall take me a heave offering." Said he: 'When the Holy One showed Moses the work of the Tabernacle, he was perplexed over its construction, as has been pointed out. Now comes the question, if it was to Moses alone that the Holy One gave the *Terumah* (heave-offering, i.e. the Shekinah), how could he have given her to others (i.e. communicated the Presence of God to the people), for it says that "the children of Israel should take a heave-offering" ? We may answer by a parable. A King stood in the midst of his people, but his Queen was not with him. As long as she was absent the people did not feel secure and were somewhat uneasy. But as soon as

the Queen arrived the whole people rejoiced, feeling that they were now safe. In like manner, although the Holy One, blessed be He, showed Israel many signs and wonders through Moses, they did not yet feel sure of themselves, but as soon as the Holy One said, "They shall take me a heave-offering that I may dwell in the midst of them" (v. 8), their confidence was at once firmly established and they rejoiced in the worship of the Holy One, blessed be He. Therefore it is written: "And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up (*kalloth*) the tabernacle . . . that the princes of Israel brought their offerings. . . ." (Num. VII, 1–3), namely on the day when the Bride (*kallah*) of Moses (Shekinah) came down to earth.

'Now the question might be asked: Wherever the expression "and it came to pass" occurs in Scripture, is it not always connected with something sad ? And the answer would be that something sad occurred also on the day when the Tabernacle was completed and the Shekinah came down to earth. For a celestial Accuser stood at Her side who covered Her Face with a veil of thick darkness to prevent Her from finding Her way down to earth. And we have been taught that a thousand and five hundred myriads of accusing angels were round about Her for the same purpose. At the same time, also, a multitude of supernal angels rose up before the Throne of the Holy One, and said: "Lord of the world ! All our splendour and all our refulgence emanates from the Shekinah of Thy Glory, and should She now descend to those below ?" But in that hour, the Shekinah gathered up all her strength and, breaking through that darkness, like one breaking through strong barriers, came down to earth. As soon as they saw this they all cried together with a loud voice: "O Lord our God, how mighty is thy name in all the earth" (Ps. VIII, 1): "mighty", because She had thus broken through so many barriers and restraining hosts and had come down to earth to reign over all. All of which explains the use of the ominous expression, "and it came to pass", in connection with the completion of the Tabernacle, indicating the pain that was suffered by many celestial armies on the day when Moses' Bride (the Shekinah) came down to

earth. Therefore it is said: "That they take Me a heave offering." Observe it does not say "Me and a heave offering", but "Me as a heave offering", to show that all is One, there is no separation, and the Tabernacle in its completion was in the likeness of that above: the one corresponded with the other in every detail, that the Shekinah might be located in it in all its aspects. Here in this world the Tabernacle was fashioned like unto the body which contains the spirit, and the Shekinah, which combines the upper with the lower, and which is the Holy Spirit, entered into this kind of body, so that the brain should dwell in a shell, all according to purpose. So the Holy Spirit becomes, as it were, a body to contain another spirit, subtle and luminous, and in this way all is contained one within the other, until it enters this world, which is the last external shell (*klifah*). The toughest husk is the one within the shell of this world, just as in a nut the outside shell is not the toughest, but the inner husk. So also above, the hard, withstanding shell is the other spirit which rules in the body; within it is a softer shell, within which again lies the brain.

'In the Holy Land, in connection with the Temple, things happened differently. The hard shell was broken in that spot and did not rule at all; it was broken there, and yawned asunder. And the opening thus made existed there as long as Israel worshipped [141a] in manner due. Their sins, however, caused the two sides of the opening to draw together, until the shell became whole again. As soon as the shell closed up over the brain it ruled over Israel and drove them out from that place. Yet, in spite of this, the hard shell cannot rule in that holy spot, since it has no right there. If that is so, it may be asked, why is the Temple still in ruins, for all destruction comes only from the influence of that hard shell? The answer is that the destruction was indeed caused by that "side" when it closed over the brain, but the Holy One prevented it from ruling in that place, and when Israel had been driven out from there, the shell broke open as before. But because the holy people was no longer there, the opening was covered with a holy covering, a kind of thin curtain, to protect that spot and prevent the hard shell from closing

over it again. This covering spreads over it from all sides. It is not possible for the holy ointment to descend upon the Land as formerly, as that thin covering prevents it, the Holy People being no longer there. Therefore it is that the ruined Temple has not been rebuilt. On the other hand, it is also impossible for the hard shell to rule there, because the thin covering prevents it from entirely closing over the brain. For this reason all the souls of members of other nations who live in the Holy Land, when they leave this world, are not accepted there, but are thrust out and are forced to roam about and go through many wanderings until they leave the Holy Land behind them and reach instead those impure regions where they belong. But all the Israelitish souls that leave this world from the Holy Land ascend from there, and that covering receives them into itself and through it they enter the Upper Holiness, because like always tends to like. And the souls of those Israelites who have departed from this world while still outside the confines of the Holy Land, and while in the power and dominion of that hard shell, wander hither and thither and roam about until they reach their appointed places. Happy is the lot of that man whose soul leaves this world in the domain of holiness, in the cavity provided by the Holy Land.

'He whose soul leaves him in the Holy Land, if his body is buried upon the day of his death, is in no way dominated by the spirit of impurity. Therefore it says of one who has been put to death by hanging that "his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day . . that thy land be not defiled" (Deut. XXI, 23), for at night the impure spirit is given permission to rule. However, although these last are given temporary power, they cannot exercise their sway within the boundaries of the Holy Land, because it is impossible for them to enter it unless they can come upon an organ or means of approach in the parts and fat of those sacrifices that are consumed at night for the purpose of feeding other (foreign) kinds.[1] But even these portions were not left with the purpose of attracting

[1] c. *supra*. p. 370.

evil potencies to the Holy Land, but rather, on the contrary, to entice them away from it, for, as has been said on another occasion, the smoke of these parts of the sacrifices was wont to ascend crookedly and drift away until it reached that hidden cavern in the North in which all the powers of the "other side" have their abode; into which cave the smoke would enter and all the demons and impure spirits be nourished thereby. But the smoke of those sacrifices which were burnt during the day ascended in a straight line unto its rightful place and all the proper spirits received nourishment from it. Over the bodies of the righteous, who were not seduced in this world by the lusts of the hard shell, the impure spirit has no power at all, because they did not associate themselves therewith. But just as the wicked in this life were seduced by that powerful shell of evil and its pleasures and practices, so are their bodies unclean after the soul has left them. The bodies of the righteous, because in this life [141*b*] they took their delight in religious rejoicings and the meals and ceremonies of Sabbaths and festivals, are, as we have said, not in the power of the impure spirit at all, since they had no joy nor part in anything appertaining to it. Blessed is he who derived no pleasure therefrom at any time of his allotted mortal span! As for him whose soul left him outside the precincts of the Holy Land, his body is defiled by that impure spirit, which remains in it until it returns to the dust. And if such a body is brought into the Holy Land to be buried, to it applies the text, "And ye entered and defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination" (Jer. II, 7)—that is: "Into My Land over which the spirit of impurity has no power or dominion, ye have brought this your body wherein that very impure spirit has entrenched itself, to be buried in the hallowed soil! Ye defile My Land!" However, the Holy One, blessed be He, provides the land with a means of purging from this defilement: when such a body decomposes, the Holy One causes a wind to blow from above which thrusts the impure spirit outside, for He has compassion on His land. Joseph's body was never under the power of the impure spirit, although his soul left him when

he was yet outside the Holy Land. Why had the "other side" no dominion over him? Because when he was alive he was never seduced by it. Yet he did not wish that his body should be taken for burial into the Holy Land, but only requested that his bones should be taken and deposited there. Jacob, again, did not die at all: his body remained intact and his spirit had no fear of the impure potencies, for his bed was filled with the perfection of the celestial light, in the brightness of the twelve tribes and of the seventy souls (which came into Egypt with him). Therefore he was not afraid of the "other side", and it had no power over him. Further, his body was in the likeness of the Supernal Form, for his beauty united all sides, and all the limbs of the first man—Adam—were united in him. Therefore Jacob said, "I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt" (Gen. XLVII, 30)—the whole body. Therefore also "the physicians embalmed Israel" in order that his body might remain intact, as was fitting. As to other men whose souls pass away in the Holy Land, their souls and bodies alike come to no harm.

"Three names has the soul of man: *nephesh*, *ruaḥ*, *neshamah*. They are all comprised one within the other, yet they have three distinct abodes. *Nephesh* remains in the grave until the body is decomposed and turned into dust, during which time it flits about in this world, seeking to mingle with the living and to learn of their troubles; and in the hour of need it intercedes for them. *Ruaḥ* enters the earthly Garden (of Eden) and there dons a likeness which is in the semblance of the body it tenanted in this world: that likeness being, as it were, a garment with which the spirit robes itself, so that it may enjoy the delights of the radiant Garden. On Sabbaths, New Moons and festivals it ascends unto higher regions, imbibes the joys thereof, and then returns to its place. Concerning this it is written: "And the spirit (*ruaḥ*) returns to God who hath given it" (Eccl. XII, 7)—namely, at the special seasons and on the special occasions which we have enumerated. *Neshamah* ascends at once to her place, the region from whence she emanated, and for her sake the light is kindled to shine above. She never again descends to

earth. In her is consummated the One who combines all sides, the upper and the lower. And as long as she has not ascended to be united with the Throne, the *ruaḥ* cannot crown itself in the lower Garden, nor can the *nephesh* be at ease in its place; but when she ascends all the others find rest. Now when the children of men are in sorrow or trouble, and repair to the graves of the departed, then the *nephesh* is awakened and it wanders forth and rouses the *ruaḥ*, which in turn rouses the Patriarchs, and then the *neshamah*. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, takes pity on the world. This matter has already been explained, although the doctrine of the *neshamah* has been put in a somewhat different form; but it all amounts to the same, and what we have said is entirely correct. Now if the *neshamah* is for one reason or another hindered from ascending to her rightful place, then the *ruaḥ*, when it reaches the door of the Garden of Eden, finds it barred, and it cannot enter, [142*a*] and so roams about unnoticed and forlorn; and as for the *nephesh*, it wanders about the world and beholds the body which was once its home devoured by worms and suffering the judgement of the grave, and it mourns therefor, as the Scripture tells us: "But the flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn" (Job XIV, 22). Thus all suffer punishment, and so they remain until the *neshamah* is able to attain to her rightful sphere above. Once this is accomplished, however, both the others are united each with its sphere; for all three are one, forming one whole, united in a mystical bond, according to the prototype above, in which *nephesh*, *ruaḥ* and *neshamah* constitute together one totality.

'The (supernal) *Nephesh* possesses in itself no light and cannot out of its own being engender it, and for this reason it is in close connection and deeply enmeshed with a certain Body,[1] which it fondles and sustains. It is concerning this *Nephesh* that it is written: "She giveth meat to her household and an appointed portion of labour to her maidens" (Prov. XXXI, 15), the "house" denoting the Body, which she feeds, and the "maidens" the limbs of that Body. The (supernal)

[1] Metatron.

Ruaḥ rides upon the *Nephesh*, dominates it, and enlightens it with supernal glory, as much as it can bear; this *Nephesh* is the throne or pedestal of this *Ruaḥ*. The (supernal) *Neshamah* produces the *Ruaḥ*, rules over it, and sheds upon it the light of life. The *Ruaḥ* depends entirely upon the *Neshamah* and is lit up by its light and nourished by its celestial food, while the *Nephesh* is similarly dependent on the *Ruaḥ*. But as long as that supernal *Neshamah* does not ascend unto the spring of the "Ancient of Ancients", the most Hidden of all hidden regions, there to be filled with the presence of Him whose glory is eternal as the waters of an unceasing and refreshing spring, so long must the *Ruaḥ* be debarred from entering into that which is its own especial Paradise, namely, the *Nephesh;* and in all cases the abode of the *Ruaḥ* is the Garden of Eden, while the *Neshamah* ascends aloft to the fountain-head, and the *Nephesh* takes up its abode in the body.

'Similarly in man below, the three are one yet separate. The *neshamah* ascends aloft to the fountain-head; the *ruaḥ* enters the Garden of Eden: and the *nephesh* finds rest in the grave. It may be asked, what in our analogy corresponds above to the grave? The answer is that "the grave" in this case is the mighty *klifah*. In this respect the soul of man corresponds, and here, as elsewhere, the lower is after the pattern of the upper. Thus there are three grades of the soul distinct one from another, although they form one bond and one mystery. As long as the bones of their human habitation remain intact in the grave, the *nephesh* remains there also, though unwillingly.

'There is here a mystery which is entrusted only to such as perceive and know the way of truth and are afraid of sin. In the hour when the *neshamah* crowns herself above with the holy crown, and the *ruaḥ* stands within the radiance of the supernal light to which it is admitted on Sabbaths, New Moons, and festivals, and when that same *ruaḥ* descends well satisfied from those feasts to enter into the Garden of Eden resplendent and radiant: in that hour the *nephesh* also rises up within the grave and assumes shape in the likeness of the

form which it previously possessed when in the living body, and in virtue of this image all the bones arise and sing praises to the Holy One, blessed be He; as it is written: "All my bones shall say (*tomarnah*), O Lord, who is like unto thee?" (Ps. XXXV, 10). And had the eye but the power and permission to perceive such matters, it would behold on the nights of Sabbaths, New Moons, and festivals, a kind of figures singing and praising the Holy One above their graves. But the folly of the children of men prevents them from having any cognizance of these matters, since they neither know nor perceive what the foundation of their lives in the world is, and have no mind to be aware of the glory of the Supernal King in this world which they can see, not to speak of the world to come, which they see not; thus they have no perception of the basis of either, or of the inner meaning of these things.

'On New Year's Day, when the world is judged, and the Throne of Judgement stands by the Supernal King, every soul (*nephesh*) hovers about and intercedes for the living. On the night following the giving of judgement they roam about, endeavouring to discover what decisions have been made concerning the fate of men in the coming year; and sometimes they communicate their knowledge to the living in the form of a vision or dream, as it is written: "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men . . . then he openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instructions" (Job XXXIII, 16): i.e. the soul puts its seal to words which it communicates to the sons of man that they may receive instruction or reproof. On the last night of the Feast of Tabernacles, when the final edicts are issued from the King, and the shadow is removed from those persons who are shortly to die, [142*b*] a certain celestial officer named Yehudiam descends with myriads of followers and bears that shadow aloft; and the soul which we have mentioned roams about and sees the shadow and returns to its place, and announces to the rest of the dead: "Such and such an one is coming to be with us"—meaning the soul of whichever shadow has been most lately borne away by the angelic

minions. If that deceased one be righteous and has lived a good life while in this world, all the dead rejoice; but if not, they all say: "Alas, alas! Woe, woe!" When the angels bring up the shadow, they deliver it to that faithful servant whose name is Metatron, and he takes it and brings it unto its due and rightful place, as it is written: "As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow" (Job VII, 2). From that hour on, a place is prepared for the *neshamah* of that man, and a place for his *ruaḥ* in the Garden of Eden, and a place for his *nephesh* to rest in during its wanderings—for there is a certain *nephesh* which has no rest, concerning which it is written that "it shall be slung out, as out of the middle of a sling" (1 Sam. XXV, 29), which *nephesh* wanders about in the world, having no rest either by day or by night, this being the greatest and direst punishment possible; and there is likewise a "*nephesh*" which is "cut off" together with the body, concerning which it is written: "and I will cut it off from its people" (Lev. XVII, 10): and there is also a *nephesh* which is not "cut off" together with the body, but is "cut off" from the place which, had it belonged to a worthy person, would have been its appointed place above, concerning which it is written: "that *nephesh* shall be cut off from my presence; I am the Lord" (*Ibid.* XXII, 3); "from My presence" means that the *ruaḥ* does not rest on it any longer; and when that is so the *nephesh* can have no part in the heavenly bliss, nor have any cognizance of any of the matters which take place in the other world. Such a *nephesh* is like that appertaining to an animal.

'A *nephesh* which is destined eventually to find rest, when in the course of its wanderings it meets with *Yehudiam*, the chief angelic messenger, with all his princes, is taken by him through all the doors of the Garden of Eden and shown all the glories of the righteous and the splendours of its own *ruaḥ*, and then it invests itself in all serenity with its *ruaḥ*, and it perceives all that is going on in the supernal world. And when that *ruaḥ* ascends to be crowned within its *neshamah* which is above, the *nephesh* joins the *ruaḥ* and clings thereto with all its strength, and receives illumination

from it, which causes it itself to shine, even as the moon borrows light from the sun. And that *ruaḥ* then joins itself in the same wise to the *neshamah*, and the *neshamah* unites herself with the end of Thought, this being the mystery of the *Nephesh* which is above, and the *Nephesh* which is above unites itself with the *Ruaḥ* which is above, and that *Ruaḥ* again with its *Neshamah*, and that *Neshamah* with the Infinite (*En-sof*). Thus is achieved harmony, peace and union both above and below. This constitutes the attainment of the rest and quietude of the *nephesh* that is below, concerning which it is written: "But the soul (*nephesh*) of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with (*et*) the Lord thy God" (1 Sam. XXV, 29); that is to say, in the union symbolized by *èt* (the first and the last letters of the alphabet, signifying the union of all things), one being like unto another. For when the Moon—which is the symbol of the supernal *Nephesh*—descends, illumined with glory from all sides, then she in her turn illumines with her radiance all the chariots and all the camps, and unites them, so that they are formed into one complete body which shines forth resplendent with the steadfast brilliance of the supernal light. In the same way the lower *nephesh*, when it descends, similarly illumined from all sides—from the light of the *neshamah* and of the *ruaḥ*—also illumines all the chariots and camps, namely the limbs and bones of its body, and forms them into one complete body which emits light. This is the significance of the words: "And he will satisfy with splendour (*ẓaḥẓaḥot*) thy soul" (Isa. LVIII, 11); and then "He will make vigorous thy bones" (*Ibid.*): that is, they will be fashioned into one complete body which will emit light, and arise to give praises to the Holy One, as has been pointed out in connection with the words, "All my bones shall say, O Lord, who is like unto Thee?" This praising does indeed constitute the rest and delight of the *nephesh*, and is verily the completion of its joy. Blessed are the righteous who fear their Lord in this world, for they merit the threefold rest of saints in the world to come.'

Then came R. Simeon and blessed R. Abba, and said:

'Happy are ye, my sons, and happy am I who have been permitted to behold how many [143a] supernal places are prepared which will shine for us in the world to come.' Then R. Simeon began to speak on the verse: "A song of degrees. They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever" (Ps. CXXV, 1). 'This verse', he said, 'has been variously interpreted, but its special significance is this: "A song of degrees" refers to the song which is sung by the supernal holy grades from the side of the celestial Might in harmony with the song of the Levites here below. There are " degrees" upon "degrees", and they worship in the mystery of the fifty years (Jubilee). "They that trust in the Lord" are the righteous which trust in their good works, as it is written: "The righteous trust (are bold) like the young lion" (Prov. XXVIII, 1). It might be objected that the righteous do not, in fact, trust in their own works, being, on the contrary, perpetually in a state of fear and trembling, like Abraham, of whom it says that he was afraid concerning Sarah (Gen. XII, 10–13); or Isaac, who was afraid (*Ibid.* XXVI, 7); or, again, like Jacob, who was likewise in fear (*Ibid.* XXXII, 8); and if these did not trust in their own good works, how much less cause for assurance have other righteous men! How, then, can it be said with any justice that "the righteous trust like the young lion"? We must observe, however, that they are compared to the *young* lion (*Kephir*), and not to the other kinds of lion, which are stronger. The young lion, although strong enough to hold his own, is, in comparison with the other kinds of lions, weak, and so does not trust his own strength. In the same manner the righteous, although confident of the power of their good works, yet do not trust in them more than the young lion in his strength. Therefore it says here: "They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion", namely, they will be in the future dispensation, not merely like the young, or even the old, lion, but like mount Zion, immovable and without fear. And ye, my sons, sons of the saints above, your trust, your confidence, is indeed like unto mount Zion. Verily, blessed are ye in this world and in the world to come!'

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GLOSSARY

HEBREW AND TECHNICAL TERMS IN VOL. III

AMIDAH. The principal part of all the three daily prayers, to be recited quietly and in a standing posture.

ANCIENT OF DAYS. The highest of the Grades of the Godhead.

APPLE FIELD. A name for the Garden of Eden.

CENTRAL PILLAR. A name for the *Sefirah Tifereth*, which unites the Right and the Left.

COMMUNITY OF ISRAEL. The Shekinah in its connection with the people of Israel.

FOUNDATION (*Yesod*). The ninth *Sefirah*, also called *Zaddik*.

GEDULAH (lit. greatness). Another name for the *Sefirah Ḥesed*.

HOLY ONE. A name commonly applied to God in the aspect of *Tifereth* (*q.v.*).

KLIFOTH (lit. 'shells' or 'husks'). The powers of evil.

LESSER COUNTENANCE. The *Sefirah Tifereth* (*Kether* being the 'long countenance').

MALKUTH (lit. sovereignty). The tenth *Sefirah*: esp., the Shekinah in connection with *Tifereth* (*q.v.*).

METATRON. The head of the 'world of creation', called also the 'servant' or the 'body' of the Shekinah.

RIGHTEOUS (*Zaddik*). The ninth *Sefirah*, also called 'Foundation'.

SHEMA (lit. hear). The fourth verse of Deut. VI, containing the proclamation of God's unity, with or without the succeeding verses.

TIFERETH (lit. beauty). The sixth *Sefirah*, often symbolized by the sun, also by the Tree of Life with twelve roots and seventy branches.

YESOD (*v.* Foundation).

ZADDIK (*v.* Righteous).

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